

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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bes-ti-ar-y: a descriptive or anecdotal treatise on various real or mythical kinds of animals
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Garvey | Simon Art Access and Littlejohn Contemporary are pleased to announce the joint exhibition, *Bestiary*, at Suite 207, 547 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001. The Gallery is located between 10th and 11th Avenues and is open Tues. – Sat. 10-6. This show will run through January 26. **A reception for the artists will be held Thursday, January 17, from 6-8 pm.**

BESTIARY explores the use of animals and fantasy creatures as muse through the eyes of 13 contemporary artists, and features work by Christopher Adams, Randy Bolton, Phyllis Bramson, Laurie Hogin, John Kindness, David Kroll, Sandy Litchfield, Jacquelyn McBain, Julia Randall, Jennifer Wynne Reeves, Anne Siems, Kiki Smith and Melanie Christine Warner.

Christopher Adams uses clay to construct hybrid animal and plant forms. Each of the 18-tendrilled works in this show range in appearance from creepy squid-like creatures to alien sea anemone and octopus. His innovative use of various glazes creates interesting skin-like surfaces on his delicate wall-mounted ceramic marvels.

Randy Bolton's work borrows nostalgic illustrations from vintage children's books. The artist alters these images and offers new meanings with an undercurrent of uncertainty or apprehension. The animal-based works in this show are burned into the handmade paper using a wood-burning tool, adding to the disquietude of the scenes.

Phyllis Bramson's whimsy and humor are revealed through her use of dog imagery in a theatrical and burlesque triptych. Her sense of spectacle is accentuated by her use of pattern, filigree, and ornate decorative elements, which all lend a rococo twist to these imaginative and open-ended portrayals of love, loss and folly.

Laurie Hogin's brightly colored guinea pigs and rabbits portray anguish, anger and arrogance. These humorous yet mischievous and often disturbing animals mimic and mirror the often-dark nature of human emotion. In this show, several of her creatures are challenging us not to get too close.

John Kindness is represented by a mosaic chicken sculpture that lurks in a corner of the exhibition. Well-known for his humorous and quirky visual commentaries and use of unconventional materials, John Kindness is one of Northern Ireland's best-known artists, particularly in relation to the work he has produced for public spaces.

David Kroll uses birds and other small creatures as his muse in his finely crafted oil paintings. His works display a quiet and private moment trapped within an almost surreal and glowing solitude. A curtain of vision has been pushed aside to unveil a dramatic pictorial elegance that elevates his creatures to a higher plane of Being. His paintings celebrate the fragility of life and the passing of time.

Meandering walks in the woods of Massachusetts often inspire **Sandy Litchfield**'s landscape-based work. Here, several of her landscapes have transformed the earth into mythological giants or spirits –

earth creatures who have come alive from the ground. Says Litchfield: "I like to envision place as something fluid rather than solid, flexible as opposed to rigid...It moves around us as much as we move around it. I'm most interested in the way memory decays, providing fertile ground for the imagination to grow."

Jacquelyn McBain's works go hand in hand with the natural world and cultural evolution. She paints a deeply felt response to nature, while also adding images from scientific inquiry and dreams. Her works have a surreal narrative quality, and offer a nod to the Old Masters in technique. These sumptuous compositions are small in scale and seem to glow from within. Her prints in this show offer a microcosm to explore.

Julia Randall's "Love Birds" in this show take the fetishization of animals to the extreme. Various exotic birds are depicted with heads and beaks that have morphed into mouths and tongues. Reminiscent of wind-up toys redesigned for human pleasure, these wacky and disturbing hybrids leave the world of Audubon, and tweak our desire to capture and consume exoticism. Her "Decoy" drawing in the show offers a surreal riff on genetically modified plants, and hint at the perils of human intervention and biotechnical "advances" in the natural world.

Jennifer Wynne Reeves' artwork offers a pictorial hybrid of color, pattern, whimsy and intelligence. Her work combines abstract elements with figuration. She presents viewers with a savvy, satirical world that combines abstraction and representation in an open-ended narrative.

Anne Siems draws inspiration from American folk motifs, European Masters, and fairy tales. Her magic realist paintings emit a haunting awkwardness and off-kilter grace with figures inhabiting a dreamy landscape that seems frozen in time. Animals are often in the foreground, adorned with delicate patterning of traditional embroidery and lace. Distinct identities emerge in each portrait with fable-like stories becoming the narrative. Rabbits, deer, owls and mythological animals are prominent subjects in Siems' menagerie.

Kiki Smith emerged in the early 1980s as one of a generation of artists who returned to figurative imagery after a period in which American art had leaned to the abstract and conceptual. Smith's works on paper, printed works and other editioned art, including books and multiples, are arguably as important as her sculpture. She is fascinated by the anatomy of the human body, and equally concerned with the natural world, and animals in particular. Smith's etchings reveal her unique sense of line and form. The fragility of the crosshatched lines that compose her series of Owls in this exhibition is belied by the power of their presence.

Melanie Christine Warner's lithographs illustrate the threshold of personal change, or the liminal state. A recent MFA graduate in Printmaking from Herron School of Art and Design, she uses animals as her main visual symbol. Her work provides glimpses of ambiguity and intangibility that come along with change during life-altering events.

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