

HIONAS GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Melanie Vote

TRACES

November 4 - 25, 2011

Opening reception: Thursday, Nov. 3, 6:00-8:00pm



Metamorphosis (2011), oil on linen, 58 x 70 in. and plaster cast of backpack

New York, NY (October 20, 2011) - Hionas Gallery is pleased to present *Traces*, the latest solo exhibition from **Melanie Vote**. With this exhibition Vote continues to challenge the very ideas and practices of mixed-media art, combining plein air & studio landscape painting with sculptural renditions of objects from her childhood. The end result are magical yet realistic scenes inspired by Vote's Midwestern roots, and her desire to create universal icons out of otherwise highly personal subject matter, such as doll figurines, a canvas backpack, and other items. The works for this show feature elements, or "traces" of those things lost or left behind following some catastrophic event; visual clues of a childhood long since past.

For Vote's Precious Moments sculptures she looks to real objects from her past - dolls' heads, ballerina figurines and similar kitsch playthings - and replicates them in plaster. In some instances, the artist will stage faux excavations of these plaster forms, first burying them in the ground then unearthing them, all the while applying the most careful of techniques, so that each new "discovery" opens a window to one's past - a time capsule of childhood innocence and archeological hoax all in one.

Adding yet another layer to this unusual practice of sculpture-cum-archaeology, Vote creates still-life portraits of these sculptures and inserts them into her oil paintings, as if

while wandering amidst the spare, rural “landscapes of my childhood,” she stumbled upon some ancient ruins, void of both symbolism and function. If De Chirico had grown up in the American Midwest, he may very well have envisioned the spacious and lush scenes that Vote creates.

For *Metamorphosis* (2011), one of Vote’s more tragic and highly detailed paintings to date, the artist draws inspiration from time spent at Jentel, Artist Residency program near Banner, Wyoming. Sitting atop a barren promontory, a little girl’s canvas backpack, shoes and clothing items - all eerily in tact - remain as clear signs of her existence. All that is missing is the girl herself and some explanation of what occurred.

According to journalist, artist and curator Brendan Carroll, who wrote the catalog essay for *Traces*, “The question or challenge [Vote] has set for herself is difficult: how to identify, capture, unleash, and convey the nightmarish visions of her unconscious without sacrificing the unfussy realism particular to plein air painting ... This show provides a unique opportunity to see an artist in transition.” Upon viewing much of Vote’s latest work, it becomes clear she is indeed at a distinctive crossroads, wherein sculpture and painting, plein air and the studio all come together. What’s more, there is evidently a want to find, according to Vote, “solace and perhaps even joy within the aftermath” of these post-apocalyptic scenes, in which the traces of things left behind are as hauntingly beautiful as the vacant landscapes they inhabit.

There will be an **opening reception** for the artist from 6:00 to 8:00pm on **Thursday, November 3, 2011**. Accompanying *Traces* will be an exhibition catalog with color reproductions of Vote’s latest paintings and sculpture, along with a contribution by Brendan Carroll.

About the Artist:

Melanie Vote’s most recent residencies include Jentel, Artist in Residency Program, Banner, WY in 2009; and the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Nebraska City, NE in 2007. She was the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2007, and was awarded a full fellowship to the Vermont Studio Center from the Dodge Foundation in 2002.

Melanie Vote was represented by DFN Gallery in New York from 2004 to 2010. Her works have been included in group exhibitions at Sloan Fine Art, New York; Flowers East Gallery, New York; Gallery Lombardi, Austin, TX; Stolen Space Gallery, London; Hans Weiss Newspace Gallery, Manchester, CT; and the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT.

Her work was most recently exhibited at the Harold B. Lemmerman Gallery at New Jersey City University, through April of 2011. Vote received her MFA in Painting from the New York Academy of Art, graduating cum laude in 1998.

About Hionas Gallery:

Hionas Gallery is a 500 sf. exhibition space located at 89 Franklin Street, in a classic TriBeCa storefront. The gallery invites contemporary and emerging artists, working in all variety of media, to participate in monthly solo exhibitions to showcase their latest work and artistic vision. The gallery space doubles as the storefront for the personal fitness studio, Peter Anthony Fitness, owned and operated by Peter Hionas. Over the years, Hionas has personally trained hundreds of celebrities and other high profile figures, including a number of artists and art world luminaries. This list includes the artists Marina Abramović, Terry Winters and Dan Colen, collector Adam Sender, architect David Rockwell, and P.S.1 founder Alanna Heiss, among many others.

Gallery owners Peter and Maria Hionas officially opened the gallery in June 2011. “We have been avid collectors of contemporary art since 1991,” says Peter Hionas. “It’s a modest storefront we have here, but also really spacious and versatile. I see us as operating in the tradition of the old Betty Parsons Gallery in midtown, or the original White Cube in St. James’s; small spaces that just show great art.”

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