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## MELANIE VOTE: *Overgrowth*

**MARCH 17 – APRIL 17, 2016**

**Opening reception: Thursday, March 17. 6:00-8:00 PM**

“To live in this world / you must be able / to do three things: / to love what is mortal; / to hold it / against your bones knowing / your own life depends on it; / and, when the time comes to let it go, / to let it go.”  
– Mary Oliver, *In Blackwater Woods*



*Place Like Home*, 2008-16 [detail]; oil on linen on panel, 26x18 in.

New York, NY (March 8, 2015) Hionas Gallery is pleased to present the solo exhibition *Overgrowth* by **Melanie Vote**. Four new paintings and one sculpture by Vote are presented within a larger installation that will, in some respects, transform the gallery into one immersive self-portrait; roomfuls of magical realist scenes, portraits, and curios, perceivably frozen in time yet not immune to nature’s advances. *Overgrowth* will be on view from March 17 to April 17, 2016.

Literal overgrowth embodies a sense of hope: life is reincarnate and all signs of

death in the underbrush begin to fade from view, and perhaps memory. By that understanding, overgrowth reflects something sobering as well: death as the great equalizer, ever-present, both real and ephemeral. *Overgrowth* is the culmination of Vote’s eight-year engagement with a number of canvases, including her large-scale work *Excavation of Life and Death*, which will be hung in the gallery’s back room. It depicts the artist lying in an excavation site, beneath and amongst tangled roots and other detritus; a subject of death yet with her form visibly flush with life. To counteract the emotional gravity of Vote’s séance, she lays this scene atop what appears to be an aged Twister board, its primary colors bleached to pastel.

Prior to Vote’s creation of this work, the canvas itself laid bare on her apartment floor for several years, a carpet-cum-concealing tool for some unsightly linoleum tiling. Little by little, as with each piece for *Overgrowth*, the scene took its form after years of toiling and soul searching. Vote’s painterly approach is meticulous, her language a lyrical realism of playful and serious notes, which is a helpful device when confronting mortality. And yet, amidst her imagery and items that depict this chronology of life’s gesture towards death then rebirth—from ashes to

ashes—Vote has rendered a world wherein the surreal is possible, even feasible, but by no means permanent.

**Melanie Vote** received her BFA in Craft Design from Iowa State University and her MFA in Painting from New York Academy of Art. She was a recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2007 and has completed several residencies including the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Nebraska City, NE; Jentel, Banner, WY; and AHAD, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Her work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions around the world. *Overgrowth* is Vote's second solo show with Hionas, her first being *Traces* in 2011.

For more information visit [www.hionasgallery.com](http://www.hionasgallery.com)

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