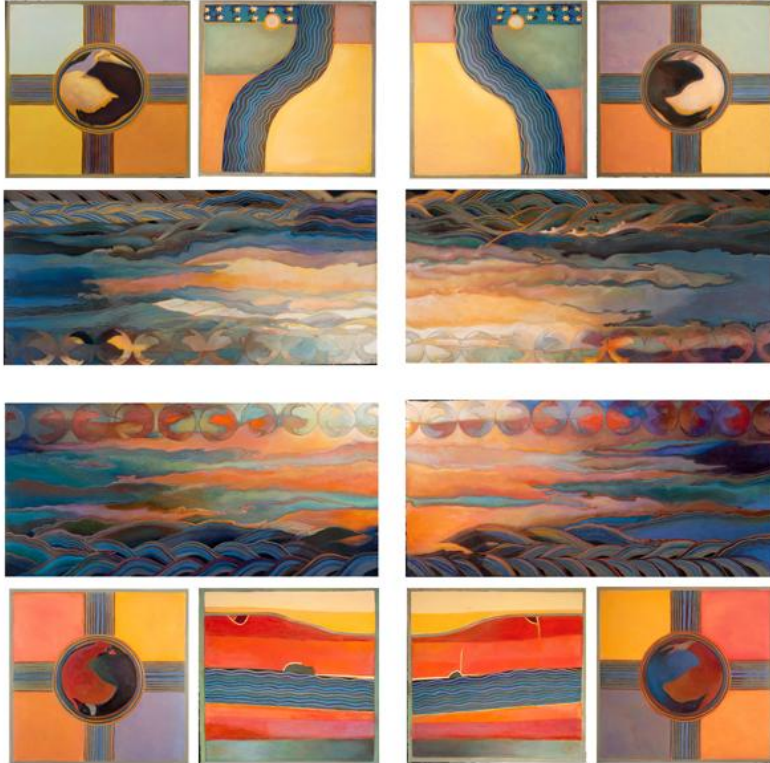


NOHRA HAIME GALLERY  
730 FIFTH AVENUE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



VALERIE HIRD  
*THE FIFTH DAY*

January 18 – March 10, 2012

VALERIE HIRD: THE FIFTH DAY, 2010-11, oil on gessoed BFK paper

VALERIE HIRD: THE FIFTH DAY, an exhibition of the artist's most recent body of work will be on view at the Nohra Haime Gallery from January 18th through March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Hird explores her personal take on the creation myth focusing on the cosmic moment before the birth of man. In a bow to Genesis, she has paused the six-day origin myth to reflect on what the natural systems in all their promise of new wonder would look like.

After years of working on projects in the political cauldron of the Middle East -- in the midst of cultural clashes, religious conflict, and endless rhetoric -- she felt overwhelmed and haunted. Lacking any belief system that made sense, she returned to the United States to create her own 'myth' and has dedicated the last two years to the re-enchantment of her own inner world.

Hird has taken the vast panoply of cultural imagery found in many different (and often competing) creation myths and has integrated them; interweaving their iconic patterns into an inseparable whole. She began with four elements -- earth, sky, water and wind -- with each making reference to the other. In the series *Sea Myth*, 2010 the sky shares its gestural aspects with water and wind. Translucent veils, bands of color, and fields of light appear to be floating and everchanging, with each painting bordered by patterns of yin/yang birds connecting one element to another.

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Keeping with her signature style of incorporating the imagery she has seen during her travels, *First Land*, 2010, incorporates designs and colors from ancient Semitic textiles, giving dimension to a primitive earth which still shared its contours with the sea and sky. In *First People*, 2010, the artist based her images of humanity - as yet unborn, still hidden within the womb of the underworld - on Neolithic anthropomorphic clay figures from Jordan.

The theme of doors, her metaphor for promise and opportunity, is also seen in Hird's new body of work. In the sculpture *Ziggurat Temple*, 2011, executed in wood and oil paint, a terraced step pyramid leads to a temple comprised of four sides; each side has a door modeled after Islamic, Byzantine, Asian and European architecture and is framed in the intricate patterns and decorative foliage identified with each culture. At the top of the temple, a double-headed Phoenix nests companionably in the center of all four of the now interwoven patterns.

Painting in a seductively ritualized manner, Hird created her personal mythology; a complex world based on integrated systems. The collective result of which is an intricate landscape of symbols and experiences that is both appealing and seductive. It leaves behind verbiage and travels toward an intoxicating world of unspoken but deeply-felt mythology.

In 2008 Hird was granted an award from the Community Foundation of Vermont. She has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad. Her work belongs to such public and corporate collections as The Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, The Fleming Museum, Burlington, VT, The Exxon Corporation, Dallas, TX, Pfizer Inc., among others. Born in Massachusetts in 1955, Hird moved to Vermont in 1979, where she currently lives and works.

RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST: Tuesday, January 17, from 6 to 8 p.m.

DATES: January 18 – March 10, 2012

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Leslie Garrett at 212-888-3550 or [gallery@nohrahaimgallery.com](mailto:gallery@nohrahaimgallery.com)