

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE



CLAIRE COWIE

12 Views

November 13 – December 20, 2008

Opening Reception

Thursday, November 13, 6 – 8 pm

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present *12 Views*, an exhibition featuring new works on paper by Claire Cowie. Cowie's work has always been distinguished by its exploration of the familiar and the strange. The artist continues to develop this tension in her most recent work, in which she creates a vast panorama of characters and scenes across a suite of individual landscapes.

In *12 Views*, Cowie takes inspiration from the prolific work of Hokusai, one of the masters of nineteenth-century Japanese painting and printmaking. In his landscapes, Hokusai challenged naturalism with abbreviation and exaggeration, creating images that were as true to the artist's imagination as they were to nature. Cowie's landscapes similarly describe a world invented in the artist's mind, representing a surreal hybridization of place and subject.

Each of Cowie's new works shares a consistent horizon line and other compositional elements, allowing for a layering of meanings that stretch beyond any individual scene. Here the artist returns to her signature subjects, including the meerkat and other familiar creatures, but she heightens her experimentation with both color and space. Creating tension through the use of unnatural hues and through a deliberate lack of defined space, Cowie plays with the balance between the comforting and the disconcerting and creates landscapes that are as psychological as they are physical.

Since her 2003 residency and exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery, Cowie's work has been featured at Tacoma Art Museum, Portland Art Museum, the University of Texas at Dallas and, most recently, Western Bridge. Reviews of her work have appeared in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Modern Painters*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday 11:00am - 5:00pm
Images are available upon request.