

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

309A THIRD AVENUE SOUTH, SEATTLE, WA 98104
tel: 206.903.6220 fax: 206.903-6226 email: mail@jamesharrisgallery.com



Press Release

Adam Sorensen *Hinterland*

January 10 – February 9

Opening Reception
January 10 6pm - 8 pm

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present *Hinterland*, an exhibition of paintings by Portland artist Adam Sorensen. Employing numerous sources in his compositions – which range from Surrealism to The Hudson River School to Japanese Anime – Sorensen explores the contemporary landscape in a way that captures how ecological circumstances have displaced traditional ways of imagining and relating to the natural world.

By utilizing a wide variety of formal means, Sorensen electrifies traditional representations of the world around us. His application of paint alternates from thick, self-referential swabs to smooth chromatic transitions that are reminiscent of computer graphics. Dark, earthy tones collide with outbursts of quasi-psychedelic colors, which can read either as signs of buzzing vitality or as instances of polluted deformities. Some compositions use a low point of view to evoke a sense of grandeur and majesty, while others monumentalize small rocks and trees to create a sense of intimacy and lending significance to minute details.

These compositional devices, borrowed from Romanticism, lend the works an underlying visual coherence in spite of their eclecticism. Together they build a contemporary sublime that exposes an ever shifting landscape beyond measurement or imitation. Sorensen shows us a world that is both beautiful and unsettling and, in turn, provides us with an excruciatingly honest picture of today's natural environment.

Gallery hours are Wed. - Sat. 11:00am - 5:00pm & Tues. by appointment
Additional images are available upon request

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Claire Cowie *Tree*

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Opening Reception
January 10 6pm - 8 pm

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present a small selection from Claire Cowie's latest body of work in our project space. Anchored by a new sculpture and including two works on paper, the show highlights a consistent theme of transmutation that has occurred throughout Cowie's work. In her new work, the artist has heightened her emphasis on creating tension between the beautiful and the grotesque.

The focal point of the show is a sculpture of a tree. Sitting in the branches of this animated and anthropomorphized object are the signature creatures Cowie is so known for. Unaware of the decay below, they nest among the brown branches. Her signature drips of paint and gesso creates fluidity of form. Accompanying the sculpture are two watercolors that like the three dimension work, emphasize a balance between familiarity and strangeness. They describe an arboreal world that is physical and psychological, comforting and disconcerting. This is a recurring theme that underlies Cowie's artistic practice to date.

One can also see traces of Cowie's recent *Village* series in which the artist utilized a bird's eye view into a bleak but stunning landscape. Though her work has always been additive, combining disembodied appendages and elements of flora and fauna now the artist has pushed these ideas to a new extreme by balancing on the line between beauty and the monstrosity. The forms are animal, human, and sometimes both, creating a personal landscape that questions: What defines our place in the world and how do we know and understand the way in which we see it?

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