



Trenton Doyle Hancock, *Duel By a Bleeder*, 2008
Mixed media on canvas, 96 x 96 inches; 243.8 x 243.8 cm

YOUNG AMERICANS:

**TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK,
ERICK SWENSON,
ALISON ELIZABETH TAYLOR**

September 11th – November 15th, 2009

**Opening Reception on Friday,
September 11th, 6-8 pm.**

Venue: James Cohan Gallery Shanghai

James Cohan Gallery is pleased to present its fall exhibition *Young Americans: Trenton Doyle Hancock, Erick Swenson, and Alison Elizabeth Taylor*. The exhibition features the work of three prominent gallery artists whose works are

becoming highly regarded in the United States and Europe. All three of these young artists use narrative in their works, each one to a unique and stunning effect. This exhibition marks their Chinese debut.

Texas-born, **Trenton Doyle Hancock's** work encompasses a wide variety of media from painting, collage, sculpture, printmaking, to the performing arts; however, primarily, Hancock identifies painting as being central to his practice. Well-known for sprawling works, Hancock uses storytelling as a way of creating context for his paintings albeit an absurdist one populated by imaginary characters like the bony, nocturnal Vegans who are engaged in an epic battle with the gentle forest dwelling Mounds, and others like helpers Torpedo Boy, St. Sesom, and the Color Babies and enemies like the evil Betto. The artist's densely layered works are composed with a collision of symbols and visual tropes that create what he refers to as an "alternate universe." Hancock says, "Like our own corporeal universe, my painted universe is comprised of a series of systems within systems that extend inward microcosmically and outward macrocosmically. It is a universe that constantly questions itself and expands in order to accommodate answers to those questions".

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Trenton Doyle Hancock is the 2007 Joyce Alexander Wein award winner from The Studio Museum, NY. His work has been included in numerous exhibitions, including *In the Beginning: Artists Respond to Genesis*, at the Contemporary Jewish Art Museum, San Francisco, CA, and was recently part of the *Dargerism: Contemporary Artists and Henry Darger* at the American Folk Art Museum, New York. He is included in Prospect 1 New Orleans Biennial, (2008 / 9). In April 2008, Hancock provided the narrative, costumes and set design for *Cult of Color: Call to Color*, a collaboration with choreographer Stephen Mills and composer Graham Reynolds for the Austin Ballet, TX. In 2007, the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, hosted Hancock's major European solo show, *The Wayward Thinker*, which traveled to the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Holland. Hancock was one of the youngest artists ever to be included in the Whitney Biennial, in both 2000 and 2002. Born in Paris, Texas, Hancock currently lives and works in Houston, Texas. His works are included in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, NY; The Dallas Museum of Art, TX; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; The Netherlands; The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Studio Museum of Harlem, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; and Museum di arte moderna e contemporanea, Trento, Italy.

With skillful object-making, **Erick Swenson** creates sculptures that embody a complex emotional terrain. Inspiration for the mythical creatures that populate Swenson's sculptures springs from the artist's childhood passion for the taxidermied animals in the dioramas at the natural history museum.

Swenson creates his own brand of drama rife with vulnerability, loneliness and isolation, as exemplified in the work *Untitled*, 2008, where an innocent deer-like creature, swathed in a black cape, is being swept up into the air and carried off by the wind. Depicted at innocent moments, but in what often appear to be the face of tragic circumstances,

Swenson's animals are a comment on the fragility of life. The viewer bears witness to an unexplained scene frozen in time. By giving few clues, Swenson sets the scene for the viewer to ponder the mysterious events leading up to the creature's fate. As curator Lynn Herbert has written, "Swenson leaves the story in our hands... and we come to see and understand the human condition, as in many a child's fable, through the eyes of the animal."



Erick Swenson, *Untitled*, 2008
Polyurethane resin, acrylic paint, MDF, polystyrene
86 1/2 x 72 x 72 inches; 219.71 x 182.88 x 182.88 cm

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Erick Swenson graduated from the School of Visual Arts, University of North Texas, in 1999. His work has received solo exhibitions at ULCA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; and at the Villa Stuck, Munich; and is the permanent collectors of The Dallas Museum of Art, The Modern Art Museum of Ft. Worth, Texas; as well as the Saatchi Collection, London, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.



Alison Elizabeth Taylor, *The Tattooist*, 2008
Wood veneer, pyrography, shellac
54 x 41 inches; 137.16 x 104.14 cm

Alison Elizabeth Taylor is well-known for re-invigorating the ancient craft of marquetry, or wood in-lay as a means for creating figurative works that explore the hidden stories of everyday lives. By using wood veneer as her medium, Taylor subverts the material's customary use as a decorative element in objects created to display wealth and power and instead uses it to depict people who are down and out on their luck. Thus, her intricate and masterful works uniquely transgress the traditional distinction between craft and high art.

With her critic's eye, Taylor's works take on as subject society's outcasts, people who live on the fringe, as the characters portrayed in *The Tattooist*, the centerpiece of this exhibition. Here, we are witness to the tattoo artist at his kitchen table, practicing his meticulous craft on the skin of a raw chicken. With its subtle reference to classical subject matter—the portrait of an artist working in his studio, Taylor's oblique narrative also hints at the underbelly of mainstream American culture and its fascination with large vehicles, guns and sex. Limited to a palette of natural woods, Taylor innovates by using the grain and tone of the veneer to explore formal issues of space, surface, line, color and form.

Alison Elizabeth Taylor is a graduate of Columbia University, School of the Arts and has had two solo exhibitions at the James Cohan Gallery in New York. Concurrent to this exhibition, Taylor has a solo show at the College of Wooster Art Museum, Ohio. Her work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions such as 96 Gillespie's *Dirty Pigeons*, London; *Other America* at Exit Art, New York; *Truly She is None Other* at New Image Gallery, Los Angeles; and *The Powder Room* at Track 16 in 2007, in Los Angeles.