

Marlborough

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Hunt Slonem / Acadian Dreams

December 7, 2011-January 7, 2012

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that an exhibition of recent work by Hunt Slonem titled *Acadian Dreams* will be held from December 7, 2011 to January 7, 2012 at Marlborough Gallery. There will be a reception on December 14 from 6-8 pm. This exhibition, the artist's seventh solo show with Marlborough Gallery, will be comprised of twenty-six oil paintings ranging from intimate portraits of Abraham Lincoln, to Slonem's well-known birds and butterflies, to large-scale canvases depicting bayou landscapes.

With the title *Acadian Dreams*, Slonem incorporates centuries of history. The Acadian people, descendants of the 17th-century French colonists of an area in the Canadian Maritime provinces called Acadia, settled in Louisiana during the French and Indian War. Cajuns are their descendants, and Acadiana is now the official name of the French Louisiana region that stretches from just west of New Orleans to the Texas border and along the Gulf of Mexico.

Hunt Slonem's fascination with the bayous and plantations of Louisiana began when he was a student of Louisiana architecture at Tulane in 1972. The artist now owns two 19th-century plantations, Albania Plantation on the Bayou Teche, in Iberia Parish, and Lakeside Plantation in Pointe Coupee Parish, both located in the heart of Acadiana. Though he maintains a studio in New York, Slonem frequently returns to the south, explaining, "The time I spend in these homes and among the people of Louisiana renews my love of the land and inspires my spirit and my art." In the large-scale paintings *Albania Plantation* (2010) and *Bayou Teche Albania Plantation* (2011), Slonem moves away from the patterns frequently seen with his birds and butterflies and creates a landscape with spatial depth. He demonstrates his familiarity with the bayou environment, using vibrant color and nearly abstract forms to impart the unique character of southern Louisiana: the humidity, the lushness, and the seductiveness.

Slonem evokes plantation life with vistas of cypress-filled swamps and the flora, birds, and butterflies that inhabit the bayous. In the 48 x 84 inch painting *Bayou Casino Lories*, Slonem overlays the repeated natural form of the bird with his characteristic *sgraffito* grids. He creates this cross-hatching with the wooden end of a paint brush, enriching the surface of the canvas and creating an overall effect of sumptuousness and tactility. The lush patterns and color as exemplified in *Bayou Casino Lories* carries throughout Slonem's oeuvre, and is seen in many works in this exhibition.

Among the paintings of almost unearthly bayou scenes and fanciful, exotic birds, the ethereal quality of Slonem's portraits

of Abraham Lincoln invokes a harmonious connection. This exhibition will feature several of Slonem's dreamlike interpretations of the popular president, including *Striped Abe* (2011), *Abe* (2011) and *Lincoln* (2011). The viewer can imagine one of these portraits gracing the wall of a plantation in the midst of the nineteenth century.

Henry Geldzahler, the late curator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and organizer of the seminal exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970*, noted:

In all Slonem's work, after one has studied it for a time, there is a seriousness about painting. The various devices that divide the space, render it shallow, thus keeping the work coherent in its own terms, add up to a consistent investigation of post-cubist abstraction. By varying the moods and techniques of his work in fresh and exciting ways, Hunt Slonem creates beautiful work that continually gives joy and surprise.

Born in Maine in 1951, Hunt Slonem attended the Skowhegen School of Painting and Sculpture. Since then, he has exhibited his work both in the United States and abroad, including his career retrospective at the Centro Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2000. His work may now be found in many private and public collections worldwide, including the Fondation Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans; Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others. Slonem has also created unforgettable public and private commissions, including his famed mural for the Bryant Park Grill in New York.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be available at the time of the exhibition.

A book signing will be held December 17 from 11:00-5:00 pm at Marlborough Gallery for the artist's recent monograph *The Worlds of Hunt Slonem*, written by Dominique Nahas and published by Vendome Press in 2011.

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