



Barnaby Whitfield, *Flamingo Road*, 2012, Pastel on paper, 51 x 33 inches (130 x 84 cm)

Summer

Piping Down The Valleys Wild Group Show

June 28 – August 3, 2012

Opening Reception Thursday, June 28, 6 – 8 PM

Stux Gallery is pleased to present our group show, Summer, "Piping Down the Valleys Wild". The title takes after the first line of William Blake's 1789 *Songs of Innocence*, the pioneering suite of poems that rethinks Milton's states of "Paradise" and the "Fall" as presented in *Paradise Lost*. This show of 16 artists presents a timely update on the discussion of the sustainability of innocence in the contemporary world.

Blake introduces "innocence" and "experience" as two states of consciousness, connected by a child's perception and increased exposure of the fallen world. These verses juxtapose the pastoral childhood with the adult world of repression, corruption and darkness, and trace the complex fears and hopes that take place as innocence diminishes.

More than two centuries later, technological advancements and ideological shifts have permanently transformed the human experience, but our enslavement to the cycle of life, longing for imagination, and capability for cruelty still linger. Consequently, innocence has become increasingly fragile and difficult to identify; a mere definition of innocence that accommodates the multiple social, political, religious and personal perspectives simultaneously at play is in itself difficult to achieve.

This show brings together an eclectic collection of viewpoints on the current role and status of innocence. **Barnaby Whitfield**, **Sokari Douglas Camp**, **Aaron Johnson**, **Shimon Okshteyn**, **Kathy Ruttenberg** and **Akikazu Iwamoto**'s narrative new works address the new multifaceted, dynamic relationship between innocence and experience. Full of ambiguity, the lively colors and stylized figures are accessible, engaging and overwhelmingly haunting. **Halim Al Karim**, **Miki Carmi**, **Maimouna Guerressi**, **Kosyo Minchev**, **Manabu Yamanaka**, and **Ruud van Empel**'s portraits instead zoom in on the human/animal body itself as a product of its natural anatomy as well as the sociopolitical climate.

In the works of **Anna Jóelsdóttir**, **James Busby**, **Margaret Evangeline**, and **Steven Charles**, human forms and storylines are transformed, replaced entirely by immersive fields of abstraction. The absence of representation urges viewers to become particularly conscious of their viewing experience, means of interpretation and personal history.

Participating artists: Halim Al Karim, James Busby, Sokari Douglas Camp, Miki Carmi, Steven Charles, Margaret Evangeline, Maimouna Guerresi, Akikazu Iwamoto, Anna Jóelsdóttir, Aaron Johnson, Kosyo Minchev, Shimon Okshteyn, Kathy Ruttenberg, Ruud van Empel, Barnaby Whitfield, Manabu Yamanaka.

-Lucy Li

For further information, please contact the gallery at Andrea@stuxgallery.com