



JENKINS JOHNSON GALLERY

# John Nava

## *Neo-Icons: Tapestries and Paintings*

May 1 – June 21, 2008

Jenkins Johnson Gallery  
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Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-6



*Signing Statement Law*, 2006, Jacquard tapestry, 114 x 77 inches, edition of 5

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Jenkins Johnson Gallery in New York is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of recent paintings and tapestries by John Nava. The exhibition runs from May 1 through May 31. There will be a reception for the artist on Thursday, May 1, 2008 from 6 to 8 PM.

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*“Today it is commonplace to rate the George W. Bush presidency as the worst in American history – an arrogant, incompetent and criminal failure that the word ‘hubris’ seems to have been invented to describe. Forgetting their complicity in this disaster, the previously acquiescent media and politicians, once so cowed by the administration’s rabid flag waving and fear mongering, now glibly criticize.”*

*“The words worn by the young people in these images are mostly drawn from the massive protests that took place worldwide during the run up to the Iraq war. They remind us that we did know then what has been so tragically confirmed now. They also remind us that it is their generation that is expected to pay the enormous material and moral costs of this debacle. And they are expected to comprehend that the legacy of preemptive war, torture, warrant-less surveillance and all the rest was the knowingly embraced and officially adopted ‘patriotism’ of our time.”*

- John Nava, March 22, 2008

John Nava confronts the viewer with the current state of American political affairs through his ethereal classical paintings and larger-than-life Jacquard tapestries. The work is a richly complex method of portraiture that recalls the Early Italian Renaissance and the Dutch Baroque. Initially, one is faced with a serenely non-confrontational image of a Gen-Y child posed almost angelically; however, with further analysis, the unequivocal nature of the statement adorning the figure’s shirt confronts the viewer with the idea that the young model is meant to represent more than just youth. Slogans like “America Tortures,” “Our Torture is Better than Their Torture,” and “Regime Change Begins at Home” force us to confront the severity of not only our country’s international position now, but the ramifications our current state will have on our children and generations of the future.

Nava creates a painting from live models before designing the corresponding tapestry by way of a digital process he developed with Magnolia Editions in West Oakland, which is woven at a small mill in Belgium. The tapestry project began after receiving a commission for the Los Angeles Cathedral and is now used by artists worldwide including Chuck Close and April Gornick. The conception of this specific method and his fastidious technique coupled with Nava’s dedication to spreading his political message makes for an arresting body of work.

*John Nava was recently reviewed in ARTnews. He holds a Master’s in Fine Arts degree from Villa Schifanoia’s Graduate School of Fine Art in Florence, Italy. He has mounted solo exhibitions with: Sullivan Goss Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA; Ventura County Museum of History and Art, Ventura, CA; Klaudia Marr Gallery, Santa Fe, NM; and the Fresno Museum of Art, CA, among others. His work is held in the permanent collections of: Exxon Corporation, Irving, TX; Madison Art Center, Madison, WI; Arthur Anderson Company, Chicago, IL; Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles, CA, to name a few.*