



JENKINS JOHNSON GALLERY

Jason Wheatley

ZooTopia

amazing acts of animal oddity

May 5 – 28, 2011

Opening Reception:
Thursday, May 5; 5:30 – 7:30

Gallery Hours:
Tuesday – Friday 10am – 5pm;
Saturday 10am – 6pm



Rooster Riders 2011 oil on canvas 24 x 18 inches



Tortoise Rider 2011 oil on canvas 26.5 x 16 inches

Jenkins Johnson Gallery is pleased to announce our fourth solo exhibition in San Francisco of new paintings by Jason Wheatley, entitled *ZooTopia: Amazing Acts of Animal Oddity*. The exhibition opens on May 5 and will be on view through May 28, 2011 with an opening reception for the artist on Thursday, May 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

In his new series, *Zootopia*, Jason Wheatley's enchanting surreal tableaux present icons of life from the natural world and hearken to the animal kingdom and evolution. He combines surrealism and magical realism to depict animal totems that represent a shrine to Mother Nature and its inhabitants. Wheatley juxtaposes bright colors and exotic animals against minimalist backgrounds to create a staged and fantastical world that transcends the viewer into an enchanting, spiritual space.

Magical Realism dates back to the earlier part of the twentieth century. It is a term used in literature and art that describes a fantastical tale or artwork often bearing underlying political criticisms. In *ZooTopia*, Wheatley reflects that the foundations of modern society such as consumerism, technology, and a resulting over abundance of waste all pay an enormous hindrance on our environment. The animals in Wheatley's work are "symbols, guides and atavistic representations that cross the evolutionary journey that mankind's consciousness has taken."

Through color and composition, Wheatley applies a layered harmony to his work. Exotic animals intermingle in a staged still life often looking directly at the viewer, drawing you into their enchanting realm. In *Tortoise Rider* Wheatley paints an animal totem of a tortoise and chimp against a minimal grey background. Wheatley's work references the still life paintings of the Dutch Old Masters but paired with a sense of humor and eccentricity the work becomes playful and vibrant while paying homage to the natural splendor of life on our planet.

Jason Wheatley received his BFA from the University of Utah. His work is part of many private collections and is included in the Springville Museum of Art in Springville, Utah. Wheatley has exhibited internationally and has received critical attention from *Art and Antiques*, *ARTnews*, and *Southwest Art*.

Jenkins Johnson Gallery established 1996; Member of San Francisco Art Dealers Association.