

Kevin Peterson

Sovereign

August 20, 2016 - September 10, 2016

(Los Angeles) - Thinkspace is pleased to present new works by Kevin Peterson in *Sovereign*, the artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery. The Houston-based painter is known for his hyperrealistic works in which urban sprawls and rough city landscapes are offset by innocent subjects. Children and wild animals peacefully coexist as complicit companions in the detritus of stark urban environments. The poetic staging of these unexpected oppositions visually elicits powerful psychological themes. Recurring concepts continue to surface in Peterson's work, like the perpetuity of change in self and environment, the navigation of personal trauma and loss, and solitude and the pursuit of companionship.

Peterson's surreal compositions are meticulously laid out as preliminary studies with photographic references and models, then rendered imaginatively in oil on panel with deft detail and technical finesse. Everything from the figurative, the animal, and the inanimate is brought to dimensional life with expert attention to light, minutiae, placement, and context. Each work is meant to capture a fleeting moment; these encounters are ambiguous and fragmentary glimpses, suggestions of a universe colonized entirely by unlikely partnerships forged between the wild and misplaced.

The artist creates visual narratives that challenge our expectations of context, suspending the divisive nature of adult disbelief. Unexpected alliances thrive between wild beasts and young children in counterintuitive city environments. The compelling fantasy evolves from the interrelationships and staged contrasts of these incredible collusions and whimsical conspiracies; the youngest of protagonists find steady companions in wild foxes and bears, apprehensively navigating the solitude of the city. In fact, the adult human world is all but absent, seen only through the darker remnants of its urban leftovers and castaways; the legacies of its failures remain: old structures and abandoned spaces, industrial vacancies, and forgotten recesses. The bystanders of adult failure tread resiliently in these voids: nature and childhood.

In earlier works Peterson had focused on a closer, cropped, and more portraiture oriented view of his subject. In these and more recent works, he has widened the frame and opened the narrative, capturing more of the subjects' environment, context, and interaction with the landscape. Graffiti graphics continue to figure prominently on the street structures in his work, looming suggestively in the backdrop and walls of these spaces. Reproduced in perfect detail and sourced from photo references of actual sites, Peterson develops a convincingly realistic snapshot of the cityscape in which to stage the wandering of his innocents. Their journeys, and what they are in search of, remain forever out of reach, but their pursuit and resilience resonate universally with our shared restlessness and disappointed inheritances.

Amanda "Mando" Marie

The Light Touch

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Concurrently on view in the Thinkspace project room is *The Light Touch*, featuring new works by Amanda "Mando" Marie. A stencil artist based out of Colorado, Marie creates large-scale site-specific murals and works on paper and canvas. Her images invoke a time of innocence through hyper-stylized and intentionally dated depictions of children and animals. With nostalgic storybook-like imagery that is at once playful and ominous, Marie subtly pairs lighter subject matter with elements of the uncanny. With graphic concision and compositional simplicity, particularly in her use of clean cut-out silhouettes, muted palettes, and graphic patterning, Marie uses seemingly innocuous images to convey more complex, and at times darker and more sinister, adult themes.

Marie's works reference old-fashioned graphics and sewing patterns, as well as vintage 1940s "Little Golden Book" era illustrations. A recurring visual theme is "twinning" imagery, or a repetition of motifs to create unsettling doubles. Combining a variety of techniques and mediums, Marie is known for her use of screen printing, wheat pasting, drawing, hand cut stenciling, spray paint and brush applied acrylic paint. At first glance, her works feel light and whimsical, but with cleverly staged tension they unfurl an unsettling, albeit nonetheless charming and seductive, world of oppositions and disquiet.

The Light Touch will showcase all of Mando's various techniques and we couldn't be more thrilled to be working with her. Marie will also be contributing a mural piece to this year's POW! WOW! Antelope Valley, and is featured in the Lancaster Museum of Art and History's show *The New Vanguard*, on view from August 13 to October 30.