

**Press Release**

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SCOTT WHITE CONTEMPORARY ART presents

***Fresh Figures & Abstraction***

A Summer Group Exhibition

Featuring Eric Johnson, Kim McCarty, Alyssa Monks, Ruth Pastine,  
Gregg Renfrow, and Steinunn Thórarinsdóttir

July 9 - September 4, 2010

Opening Reception: Friday, July 9, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**(San Diego, California) - For Immediate Release**

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**EXHIBITION SUMMARY:**

Scott White Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Fresh Figures & Abstraction*, a summer group exhibition featuring the work of new gallery artists Eric Johnson, Kim McCarty, Alyssa Monks, Ruth Pastine, Gregg Renfrow, and Steinunn Thórarinsdóttir.

The opening reception will take place on Friday, July 9 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. in conjunction with *Kettner Nights*. Light refreshments will be served.

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**EXHIBITION DETAILS:**

Scott White Contemporary Art presents its yearly summer group exhibition featuring the work of new artists recently added to the gallery's roster. Typically mounted each summer, this group exhibition showcases the highest caliber of talent from a pool of national and international contemporary artists who have garnered attention and interest from collectors, critics, curators and museums. The 6 artists represented in this exhibition are accomplished and celebrated artists at the top of their creative game, consistently producing relevant and intriguing work, and exhibiting on national and international scales. 3 are figurative artists, 3 are abstract artists, each with distinctive and poignant perspectives on the conceptual and/or tactical execution of their work.

***Fresh Figures***

The three figurative artists in the exhibition are Icelandic sculptor Steinunn Thórarinsdóttir, Brooklyn-based painter Alyssa Monks, and Los Angeles-based painter Kim McCarty. Each present new viewpoints on the subject of figuration, infused with 21<sup>st</sup> century views that invigorate a genre that has existed since the beginning of human history. Add to the fact: all three artists are women, presenting work on a subject that has a male-dominant history.

Steinnun Thórarinsdóttir's sculptures are created through a technique called sand-casting, a process that allows for emphasizing a lack of detail. Upon first sight, Thórarinsdóttir's figures are anonymous and stoic, even existential in presence. The cold and distant personality of these sculptures seem inspired from the remote and barren landscape of the artist's Icelandic homeland. However, seeing the sculptures in the context of space changes this tone. While the figures themselves seem robotic and cold, their mood transforms to a contemplative and harmonious nature when examined in the context of the space they occupy. The surface achieved by the sand-casting process gives the forms an organic and gritty effect,

mimicking ground textures like sand, dirt, and asphalt. When situated in a space, the figures seem as if they are emerging out of the earth, almost as if they are being born, taking on the human form. Consequently, the artist casts her figures using minerals from the earth such as iron, aluminum, bronze and glass. Examined in the context of space, an installation of Thórarinsdóttir's sculptures suggest a silent dialogue between the figure and its natural surrounding, intriguing thought and stirring wonder about the narrative being played out between the sculpture and its environment.

Alyssa Monks paints strikingly real renderings of figures in showers and baths, a subject and situation repeatedly examined throughout art history. Monks presents her perspective and contribution on this historically prolific subject, by creating fresh, vibrantly rich and deceptively real-looking images. The figure is the primary player in her work, but falling right behind is the water. Her process begins with creating photographic studies. Managing to manipulate the slick, unruly and unpredictable nature of water requires careful planning and staging. Some models are friends and acquaintances she recruits, but mostly she uses herself, getting in front of the camera to retain absolute control of expression and form. Oils and minerals are often added in the water to maximize its reflective qualities. Once the photographic studies are made, Monks begins translating the image on linen, painting with oils. The works are large in scale, upwards of four to six feet, and when examined closely, square inch sections seem like abstract renderings of biomorphic shapes and circular forms. In stepping back, the image reveals a photorealistic rendering of a face submerged just below the surface of a bathtub, or a nude figure soaking against a translucent plastic shower curtain. And while the scene is executed in a striking photorealist style, the figures are abstracted naturally through the distortions, fragmentations and translucencies conveyed by the water or shower curtain. The result is an intoxicatingly luscious image, conveying an intimate and hauntingly voyeuristic look at an age-old subject.

Kim McCarty's watercolor portraits convey a delicate, fluid and whimsical expression of youth. In many of McCarty's portraits, she depicts figures on the cusp of adulthood, often androgynous and ambiguous in detail, communicating the introspective and confusing nature of adolescence. The fluidity of expression is emphasized by the artist's chosen medium of watercolor. The frail and sanguine depictions of the characters, with piercingly expressive glances, reference the enigmatic search for identity and meaning that one experiences during adolescence. The resulting image is a hauntingly sensual, familiar and intimate expression of a very human experience.

### **Fresh Abstraction**

The three abstract artists presented in the exhibition are Ruth Pastine, Gregg Renfrow and Eric Johnson. While Pastine and Renfrow paint, Johnson sculpts, each presenting distinct and fresh views on abstraction. There is a commonality among these artists: they are all based in California, and have all taken the inheritance of the Light and Space movement, which generated out of the West Coast in the 1960's. The work of these three artists resonates a glowing luminosity and vast transcendence that capture the light, space and spirit of the West Coast. Through vibrant colors, visceral modulations, and impeccable surface qualities, the work of these artists continues the expression of abstraction developed by the Light and Space artists, while contributing their own sensibilities and meaning to the tradition of abstraction. This portion of the exhibition also foreshadows a larger show the gallery plans for in the fall, appropriately titled *Light & Space*, which opens on September 10, 2010.

Ruth Pastine grew up in New York City where she regularly visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA and the Guggenheim. Self-affirmed as an artist at an early age, Pastine was deeply influenced by Abstract Expressionism, specifically by Color Field paintings. Her work found natural progression and evolution when she moved to the West Coast in 2001, where her explorations in Color Field painting found appropriate relevance with the Light and Space movement. Pastine's paintings are flawless, resonating deep saturations of color that effortlessly oscillate from one hue to another. The surfaces of her paintings are perfect, telling no tales on how the paint was applied. When examining her work, viewers can get lost in her fields of color. With no reference of a horizon line, no beginning or end, the paintings take you to a sensual and spiritual realm, where meditations on color, light and space can peacefully take place.

Based in San Francisco, where he has lived and worked since the 1970's when he attended the San Francisco Art Institute, Gregg Renfrow continues to expand on the ideas developed by the Light and Space artists, specifically addressing the depiction of light in his work. He succeeds in the actual portrayal of real light by layering glazed acrylic media on his surfaces, thin color washes that bleed into colorless areas. Much in the way a prism surface refracts, filters and reflects light, Renfrow's surfaces are translucent with a satin sheen, allowing the natural and artificial light around the work to dance, play and enhance the

viewer's perception of the passage of light. Alluring, luminous and ethereal, Renfrow's work creates a stage for real light to play in tandem with the lyrical expression of his color fields.

Eric Johnson addresses common themes in abstract expressionism such as light, color, movement, form and surface, but works in three-dimensions. His sculptures render expressive and vibrant forms of abstraction, paying homage to the Light and Space tradition. Naturally, the movement influenced Johnson as he attended the California Institute of the Arts and UC Irvine through the late 1970's and early 1980's. Using wood and composite resin, Johnson creates purely abstract forms, but conveys an animated quality in the work. By incorporating names of women in their titles (like *Ginger Heart I*, *Aria*, or *Madame Venus*), Johnson hints that these abstract forms are infused with a feminine quality. Amorphous, fluid and sensual, the sculptures come to life as they seduce the viewer with rich color and glossy surfaces.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST VISUAL MATERIALS, PLEASE CONTACT  
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**GALLERY INFORMATION:**  
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Hours:  
Mon – Fri, 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.  
Sat, 11:00 – 5:00 p.m.

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