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For press inquiries please contact: Janis Gardner Cecil (jcecil@marlboroughgallery.com) at Marlborough Gallery, tel: 212.541.4900; fax: 212.541.4948.



L.C. Armstrong: New Paintings
Debut Exhibition with Marlborough Gallery in April 2007

February 2007 – The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that painter L.C. Armstrong has joined the gallery. Her exhibition of new paintings will open at 40 West 57th Street on April 4 and continue through April 28, 2007. Armstrong's Marlborough debut will feature a dazzling group of maximalist landscape and flower paintings in her signature technique – acrylic with bomb fuse and resin on linen. Combining her interest in the Romantic tradition with California Fetish Finish, Armstrong's color-saturated and highly detailed paintings are the visual equivalent of magic realism.

Armstrong's exhibition, her first in New York since 2001, will include eight paintings completed in 2006 and 2007, including two large triptychs measuring five by twelve feet (152.4 x 365.7 cm) and one triptych measuring four by twelve feet (121.9 x 365.7 cm). Joining these are canvases such as *Orchids over Animal Isles*, 2007, measuring 60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm) and *Tween Heaven and the Deep Blue Sea*, 2007, measuring 36 x 32 inches (91.4 x 81.3 cm), which depicts a young girl from behind gazing at a dazzling blue ocean criss-crossed by gigantic, exotic flora with stems "painted" in the residue of burnt bomb fuse. Clearly present in both of these painting are numerous mammals, which Armstrong has introduced in this show for the first time in great number and to great effect.

A swooning pink glow imbues *Pale Male over Pink Pastorale*, 2006 (60 x 144 in./152.4 x 365.7 cm), a monumental landscape triptych depicting a lake surrounded by mountains, while the eponymous hawk famous for a destroyed Fifth Avenue nest soars down the center panel, a string of pearls in its beak. The all-over frontality of the flowers – orchids, lilies, Gerbera daisies, mutant

irises, pansies and hibiscus – are aggressively cheery in tones of blush, magenta, and rose, especially a branch of soft pink cherry blossoms upon which a poisonous snake prepares to attack an unsuspecting bird. Armstrong depicts a menacing beauty here, in which the not so subtle message is “trouble in paradise.”

When Armstrong started painting flowers and landscapes in the early 1990s, few of her contemporaries focused on these subjects. Landscapes and flowers were subjects so discarded that they were ripe for re-investigation. Adoption of this subject matter allowed her to expand her pallet to its fullest and her intensive study of color (notably Joseph Albers' *Interaction of Color*) facilitated this pursuit. Armstrong poignantly comments on her artistic heritage:

Influences in my work begin with the Northern Romantic Landscape artists Caspar David Friedrich and Philip Runge through the Hudson River School, especially Edward Hicks (a sign painter) and Luminists such as John F. Kensett and Martin Johnson Heade, to the westerns of John Ford with the lone figure in the sunset through pop album covers and van murals to the California artists like Minimalist John McCracken, whose studio was a few miles from my father's neon sign shop.

Working intuitively in a deep meditative state, Armstrong does not plan her paintings, but lets the imagery find itself from her psyche onto the canvas, attempting to make sense of the world and herself in the process. Room is left for interpretation. Bright red poppies and a ring of fire encircling women are found in the painting *Poppies over Putto*, 2007 (60 x 48 inches/152.4 x 121.9 cm). Is this a political statement? Armstrong communicates her visions through her masterful technique allowing the viewer to construct whatever meaning there may be. Psychic landscapes akin to visual poetry, Armstrong's work engages the utopian and the kitsch as she consciously dedicates her expert hand to an exploration of nature's beauty and perils.

Born in Humbolt, Tennessee, Armstrong completed two degrees from Pasadena's Art College Center of Design and San Francisco's Art Institute, all the while customizing vans, motorcycles, airplanes and hot rod cars, perfecting her technique and supporting herself through school. In 1991, Armstrong was the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and in that same year her work was included in The Corcoran Biennial and purchased by the museum. After her first solo show at Galerie Sophia Ungers in Cologne, Germany in 1991, Armstrong exhibited at White Columns in New York in 1992 and over the next fifteen years with Bravin Post Lee in New York, then Postmasters in New York, and Marsha Mateyka in Washington, DC, and prepared successful shows for galleries in Frankfurt, Paris and Santa Monica.

Armstrong's work has been included in a number of significant thematic exhibitions, most recently in *Open House*, at the Brooklyn Museum and *Flower Power*, Musée des Beaux Arts, Lille, both in 2004; *POPulence*, at the Blaffer Gallery, The Art Museum of the University of Houston, TX in 2005; *Revising Arcadia*, at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL and *Garden Paradise*, at the Arsenal Gallery, Central Park, New York, both in 2006. A fully illustrated catalogue, with an essay by Adrian Dannatt, will be available at the time of the exhibition.

Marlborough Chelsea (opening fall 2007), 545 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10011, telephone 212.541.4900m, fax 212.541.4948, chelsea@marlboroughgallery.com

Marlborough Fine Art (London) Ltd., 6 Albemarle Street, London W1S 4BY, telephone 44.20.7629.5161, fax 44.20.7629.6338, mfa@marlboroughfineart.com
Marlborough Monaco, 4 Quai Antoine 1er, MC 98000 Monaco, telephone 377.97702550, fax 377.97702559, art@marlborough - monaco.com