

Front Room Gallery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Front Room Gallery Presents:

"Within The Menagerie"

Melissa Pokorny

Julia Whitney Barnes

May 22nd-June 21st

Reception Fri. May 22nd, 6-9 pm

Viewing hours: Fri-Sun 1-6 and by appt.

Front Room Gallery is pleased to present "Within the Menagerie," an exhibition featuring sculptures by Melissa Pokorny and an installation by Julia Whitney Barnes. Both artists explore the contexts in which we perceive our environment, and the multi-faceted layers of awareness. Pokorny and Whitney Barnes examine the nature in, and of, our surroundings, presenting them in a playful menagerie of intriguing interactions.

Julia Whitney Barnes' installation, "La Jardinière" is a stunning vision of an abstracted vertical garden; where authentic-nature and simulated-nature elements coincide through multilayered planes of wall painting, representations of tree bark from industrialized wood, ceramic pressed bark, direct slip casts, floral representations in ceramic, and



Julia Whitney Barnes, "Jardinière," 2007-2009, mixed media (wood panel, roots, burls, branches, porcelain, stoneware, earthenware, glaze, oxides, gold luster, epoxy, wire and acrylic paint) 120"H x 259"W x 15"D



Melissa Pokorny, "Fall Together Apart," 2009, mixed media

collected natural elements. The incorporation and fusion of these components is inspired by the urban experience of mediated nature settings, including elaborately planned parks and gardens, and through images of exotic places seen through the media. In this installation Whitney Barnes presents a tribute to endangered tropical plant species and coral reefs as they are nestled among locally inspired and collected natural elements.

With her situational sculptural assemblages, Melissa Pokorny explores causality and contingency as a process, reflecting on how the presence of one component can affect the narrative potential and physical interactions within a collection of images and/or objects. Pokorny's sculptures present a menagerie of exotic combinations of common and familiar elements, creating architectural constructions from farcical building materials. Pokorny is particularly interested in the usage of life-sized statuary animals, and luridly bad (but all the more beloved) replicas of historical decorative genres in her work. Blasted narratives are suggested by her sculptures, wherein the familiar is made strange and the normal boundaries between nature and culture, the historical and the contemporary are irrevocably radicalized and compressed.