

POSTMASTERS

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for immediate release:

April 9 - May 7, 2005
ANTHONY GOICOLEA
"Sheltered Life"

opening reception: Saturday, April 9, 6-8 pm

Postmasters Gallery is pleased to present "Sheltered Life" - an exhibition of new photographs, drawings and video installation by Anthony Goicolea. This will be the artist's first show with Postmasters. A large survey exhibition of his works is currently on view at the Arizona State University Museum of Art in Tempe, AZ.

As in his past works Goicolea uses photography, drawing, and video as different components of exploring the same narrative territory. "Sheltered Life" is a series of digitally constructed photographs which depicts fairytale-like, timeless places inhabited by contemporary characters. All of the landscapes are punctuated with alternative makeshift living spaces which are made up of, as well as incorporated into, the surrounding environment. Many of the figures in the photos are reduced in size and are almost swallowed by their surroundings. The characters are often masked, hooded, or seen from the back in order to preserve their identity. They operate as a single unit, living in situations that simultaneously reference backyard playdates and hippie communes, as well as detainment camps and disaster relief areas. Their living arrangements and concealed identities cement their status as outcasts or refugees from society. The composed wooded scenes depicted in many of the photos are bisected into two halves and are often times seen as a cross-section of themselves. In images like "Ice Storm," or "Dead Tree Forest" the bottom half of the photo is relegated to a violent underworld of roots, dirt, rock, and earth which are stratified into a multilayered platform or stage on which scenes are acted out. The shelters which inhabit the photos range in form from tree houses, lean-to's, and caves, to cardboard forts or dilapidated barns. Their playfulness undermines the sort of desperate haphazard construction and deeper desire to migrate or live on the outside of communities.

The sense of foreboding tinged with playful fantasy characteristic of many of the photographs is mimicked in a suite of complex figurative drawings on mylar. Androgynous figures of indeterminate age float on top of and through each other in a layered composition separated by planes of semi-opaque vellum paper. The ghostlike figures are caught in free-floating, awkward, transitional states: sometimes their images are doubled; sometimes they seem like as much animal as human. As the figures migrate through the forest in small packs, they fade in and out of each other in a series of tentative lines that read like traces of previous drawings and refer to memory and transition.

A large white barn occupies the second room gallery and acts as a shelter within a shelter while housing a 15 minute single channel video entitled "Kidnap." The video recounts the tale of a young boy's obsession and paranoia of being kidnapped. Shot in the Swiss countryside, several characters dressed in red-hooded uniforms engage in a series of clandestine rituals that unfold in a fairytale-like sequence.

The video chronicles the passage of time during a 12-hour period from dusk to dawn. The central timekeeping device during the video is the construction of a large wooden bonfire and its subsequent incineration and destruction. All the while, the film is narrated by a series of disjointed subtitles. The narration switches back and forth from first to third person and confuses perceptions of past and present. Using imagery such as fire, skull-and-crossbones, scarecrows, daggers, and red-hooded cloaks, as well as a soundtrack composed of distorted Christmas tunes, the video relies on iconic and allegorical childhood narratives to portray activities anchored in reality but predicated on fantastical narrative structures such as fairy tales, fables, and myths.

"Drawings" by Anthony Goicolea - a limited edition book published by Twin Palms Press will be pre- released concurrently with the exhibition and available at Postmasters.

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Postmasters Gallery, located in Chelsea at 459 West 19th Street (corner of 10th Avenue), is open Tuesday through Saturday to 11 - 6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon at 212-727-3323 with any questions or image requests. Full documentation of the exhibition will be online by April 12.

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