

# POSTMASTERS

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for immediate release:

September 6 – October 11, 2008

## SALLY SMART "Decoy Nest"

opening reception: Saturday, September, 6 -8 pm

Postmasters Gallery is pleased to announce a new exhibition of Australian artist Sally Smart. The show titled **Decoy Nest** will open on September 6 and will be on view until October 11, 2008. This will be Smart's second solo exhibition in New York following her 2006 installation **The Exquisite Pirate**.

Opening reception is scheduled for Saturday, September 6 between 6 and 8 pm.

Smart is known for her often monumental scale assemblage installations applied directly to the wall. **Decoy Nest** - a centerpiece of the show - represents a huge sprawling tree "inhabited" by people, body parts, and camouflaged objects. Occupying a main wall of the gallery this 15 x 33 feet artwork is an intricate, complex collage and photo-montage cut-out made from painted canvas, printed fabric and photographic segments (tree bark, human figures and foliage). The installation engages the viewer in a hide-and-seek game to locate recognizable elements within the composition where human limbs often extend the twigs and tree branches. **Decoy Nest** is accompanied by two other collage cut-out works, **Twilight Tree** and **Phantom (limb) Tree**.

About her new project Smart says:

This series of work has developed from my long-term interest in representations of the tree, with reference to contemporary and historical models, namely the tree house, family tree, tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Most recently my thinking has been organized around literal and metaphorical iconography of the tree and pressing ecological concerns with a tree as a symbolic stand-in for nature. It was while traveling in Belgium last year and noticing the bird nests in trees along the freeways, that I learned of the 'decoy nest', the strategy that birds use to deflect attention from their precious eggs. In thinking about the idea of a decoy (masking, camouflage and metamorphosis) I began to draw connections to my art practice, in the strategies I used in conveying and creating meaning.

**Decoy Nest** is about making a visual construction of ideas like mapping, diagramming, charting, or planning; but it remains open, showing the process of that kind of working, drawing, assembling. I imagine picturing thinking about the meanings of the world; inevitably the discourse begins with the body, a forensic activity, an external and internal examination of the parts, displaying what is seen, including the parts of the body's environment: clothes, house, furniture, landscape. This becomes an anatomy of the world lesson; where dissected parts are examined and reconstructions are made for explanations. Inevitably the conclusion is like a puzzle-picture: a maze of fugitive parts; tree parts become human parts, and body parts become abstract.

Discussing the ephemeral character of Smart's installations, Melissa Miles writes:

By emphasizing the pins and joins that connect each of her formal components, Smart makes visible the highly physical and performative processes of collecting, cutting, reconstructing and pinning through which her work is produced. This performative quality is reiterated by the figure that appears towards the top of **Decoy Nest**, a photograph of Smart herself. Layers of practice, material and metaphor

overlap and double back in this nest, as Smart's practice of pinning forms a decoy whose meaning cannot ultimately be pinned down.

( Melissa Miles is a lecturer in Theory of Art & Design at the Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University, Australia).

Sally Smart currently lives in Melbourne. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, fellowships and prizes. She graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne with an MFA. Smart has exhibited widely in Australia and since 1998 exhibited regularly in exhibitions around the world. These include:

**Treescape** National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia (2008); **The Exquisite Pirate (China Sea)** Amelia Johnson Contemporary, Hong Kong (2008); **The Exquisite Pirate (Yawk, Yawk)**, Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art, Darwin, Australia (2007); **New History** The Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, Hunter College, New York (2007); **The Exquisite Pirate (Large Craft)** Kaliman Gallery, Sydney and Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia (2007-2008); **Dangerous Waters** Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (2006); **2006 Contemporary Commonwealth**, The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne, Australia (2006); **The Exquisite Pirate** Postmasters Gallery, New York (2006); **The Exquisite Pirate** Jogja Biennale, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2005) **Surface Charge**, VCU Arts Anderson Gallery, Richmond Virginia, USA (2005) **Architypes** Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada (International Tour Sydney, Tokyo 2004-2005); **Femmage**, Galeria Baro Senna, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2001); **Parameters Head**, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide; **Family Tree House** Project Space, Arco, Madrid Spain (2000); **Re-empplace**, Earl Lu Gallery Singapore (1999); **Femmage Shadows and Symptoms**, Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan (1999); **Pusan Biennale**, Pusan, Korea (1999), and **Unhomely**, Sonje Museum of Contemporary Art Kyongju and Seoul, Korea (1998).

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Postmasters Gallery located at 459 west 19th Street between 9 and 10 Avenues is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 - 6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon with questions and image requests

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#### **UPCOMING:**

October/November – **KATARZYNA KOZYRA**  
November/December – **JENNIFER and KEVIN McCOY**  
January – **DAVID DIAO**

**OMER FAST** and **GUY BEN-NER** are included in **Liverpool Biennial** opening Sept 20, 2008  
Postmasters Gallery will participate in **PULSE Miami 2008**