

# POSTMASTERS

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April 2 - May 8, 2010

Postmasters Gallery presents two exhibitions:

gallery 1

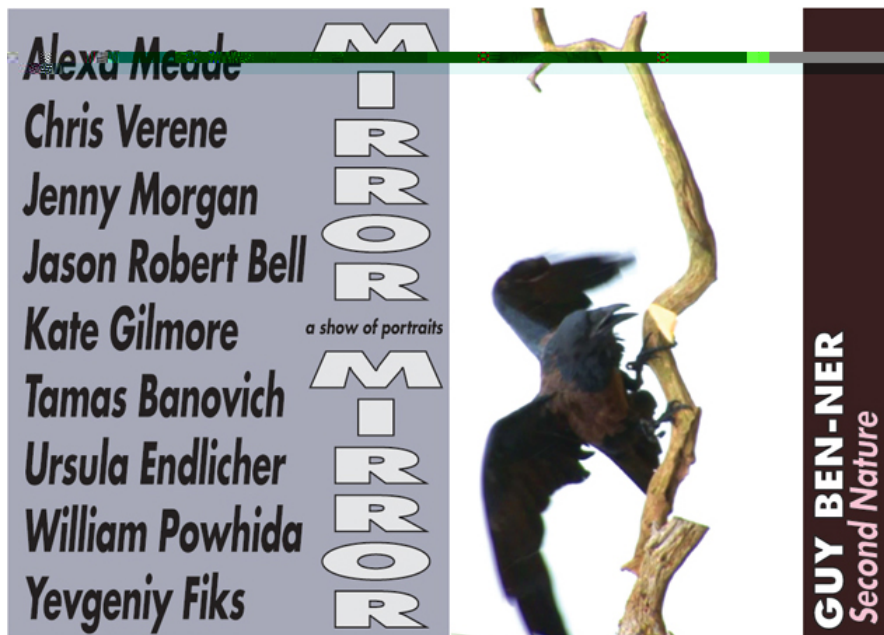
## ***Mirror, Mirror***

a show of portraits

gallery2

## ***Second Nature* - a video by GUY BEN\_NER**

opening reception for both shows: Friday, April 2, 6-8 pm



### ***Mirror, Mirror***

The portrait has been a staple of art going back to the Egyptians and the sculptural bust of Nefertiti. Then 3300 or so years later came Andy and Alice and Chuck and Cindy and Annie. What's next? The mind wanders and wonders about something new and relevant to the present moment that the genre can deliver. "Mirror, Mirror" is a group exhibition of nine artists engaged with contemporary portraiture in all media. The works in the show present a variety of approaches from realistic, exquisitely rendered paintings of the artist's friends (Jenny Morgan) and traditional portraits of the members of American Communist Party (Yevgeniy Fiks) to biting satirical drawings (William Powhida), unsettling video self portraits (Kate Gilmore), photographs of three generations of artist's family in the rural Midwest (Chris Verene), video reenactments of people on Facebook who share the same name (Ursula Endlicher), portraits painted directly on top of the people they represent and then photographed to look like a painting (Alexa Meade), and metaphysical psychedelic portraits of people's souls (Jason Robert Bell). Tamas Banovich, will contribute a work involving Chatroulette.

**GUY BEN-NER *Second Nature***

Employing animals, animal trainers and an on-camera film crew all speaking in rhyme *Second Nature* restages Aesop's fable *The Fox and the Crow* combined with Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

*Can you tell a fable today? Is it not too arrogant to believe you can educate someone? On the other hand, if I believed art could not deliver any kind of lesson or critique of the world, I would stop making it.* (Guy Ben-Ner)

In *Second Nature* Ben-Ner has created a video that emerges from Aesop's fable *The Fox and the Crow*. It is a video in three parts that blurs the boundaries between 'fact and fiction'. One part of the video is shot as a documentary about specialist animal trainers training a fox and a crow to re-enact the fable, but develops into a fictional re-telling of the fable itself by the animals, interjected with a re-enactment of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* by the animal trainers. The dialogue between human and animal is crucial, exploring subtle modifications in behaviour made through the interaction between the two, where one can never truly control the other.

In the repetitive and questionably futile action of trainee and trainer, Ben-Ner's video owes much to the plays of Beckett - the trainer trains the animals to re-enact the fable; Ben-Ner trains the trainer to act in the documentary and the play; and the animals train each other within the tale itself. He uses the same setting, a lonely tree, to tell two different stories - one a fable and one a play. Ben-Ner reveals the function of fables - the use of animals to tell human stories and instruct our own moral behaviour - and mimics their strategies to manipulate the animal trainers as the fable unfolds. Essentially the action is the same, repeated again and again. (Kyla McDonald - catalog for the Liverpool Biennial 2008.)

GUY BEN-NER

*Second Nature*, 2008

Single channel video, color with sound, 10:10 min

Animals Supplied by: Birds and Animals UK

Fox Trainer: Guillaume Grange

Crow Trainer: Gwen Griffith

Fox: Bambi and Briar

Crow: Oreo and Nabisco

Film Production: Roger Appleton

Sound Recording: Alan Watson

Editing Facilities: CCA, Tel Aviv

Commissioned by Liverpool Biennial International 08



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Postmasters Gallery located at 459 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street between  
9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 – 6  
pm Please contact Magdalena Sawon or Paulina Bebecka with  
questions and image requests  
[www.postmastersart.com](http://www.postmastersart.com)

upcoming exhibition

EVA AND FRANCO MATTES aka 0100101110101101.org (opening May 15)