

MEDIA RELEASE

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RAYMOND UHLIR

Fore Fathers

November 10, 2006 through January 6, 2007
Opening Reception: Friday, November 10, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Deborah Cotton Gallery is pleased to present *Fore Fathers*, its second solo exhibition of paintings and drawings by **Raymond Uhlir**. The Austin-based artist's work was first seen at Deborah Cotton Gallery in his 2005 exhibition *Hooray for Sanctimony*. The exhibition opens Friday, November 10, 2006 with a reception for the artist from 6-8 p.m.

Raymond Uhlir's work exists on a bygone, but technologically-infused plane. He often marries historicized human figures and, quite regularly, animated animals and video game iconography in surreal situations that defy immediate logic. Finding that he is concerned with depicting a visual language that appeals directly to a generation raised on cartoons and video games, Uhlir isn't interested in academic discussions of high versus low culture. "The distinction of high and low culture that Warhol helped break apart," Uhlir says, "has ceased to exist in a meaningful way for many of us. Symphonies play Radiohead, Chris Ware gets a spot in the Whitney Biennial, and Murakami designs for Louis Vuitton. It's all the same playing field in a 'cultureless' society."

Utilizing a super-flat, graphic aesthetic with intense color, Uhlir's work on the surface initially appears whimsical, but on closer inspection reveals a much darker interpretation of events. Borrowing compositional devices from 18th century Italian painting as well as Japanese prints from the Edo/Meiji periods, Uhlir also works to replicate the look and feel of a Saturday morning cartoon or a video game such as *Street Fighter*. "Nothing played three to four hours a day," says Uhlir, "by millions of children lacks both visual and cultural significance." Ruthless slaughter leads to another "1up" or 'extra life' bonus. Generals cloaked in religious garb advocate for a 'supreme being,' who may or may not be divine, at the point of a sword or end of a gun barrel. Animated animals perform seemingly violent humanistic rituals and represent the anthropomorphization of the natural world in order to fuel our needs for, and ideas of, security and control.

The conceptualized violence found in Uhlir's work is prolific in entertainment at all levels. For him such concepts reinforce the notion that, as a society, we have been desensitized to copious amounts of violence; enough so that it is considered amusing. Fortunately Uhlir's work operates as an allegory that allows us to question and re-examine contemporary cultural conflicts and value contradictions.

Raymond Uhlir is a graduate of University of Texas - Austin (BFA) and was the recipient of the Marshall F. Wells Fellowship Endowment. Uhlir lives and works in Austin, Texas.

The exhibition continues through January 6, 2007.

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, and conceptual and future media installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.