



MARK MOORE GALLERY | **JEREMY FISH** STATEMENTS

JEREMY FISH

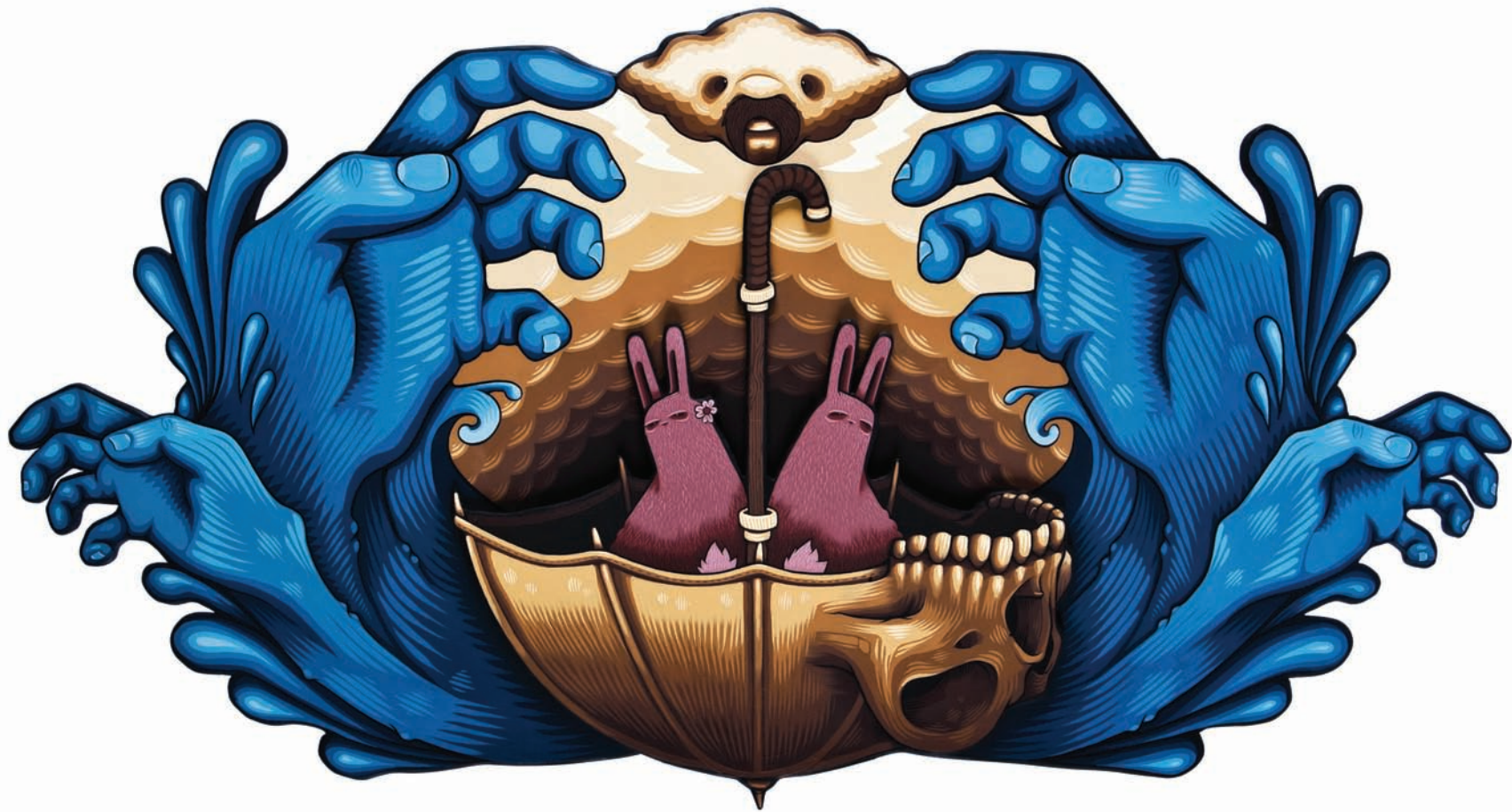
STATEMENTS

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Mark Moore Gallery: *Statements* introduces a featured gallery artist through images and candid interview. From noteworthy early examples to present bodies, the works featured in *Statements* act as an overview of the varying practices and movements implemented by a given artist in tandem with their thoughts and interpretations.

Jeremy Fish hails from a graphic design background; his projects with Nike and rap artist Aesop Rock have lead to heightened visibility, while partnerships with Upper Playground and 5024sf (San Francisco, CA) have allotted for his recognition in the contemporary art sphere. Bridging the gap between popular conceptions of "high" vs. "low" art, much like peers Mark Ryden, Ryan McGuinness and Barry McGee, Fish's Orwellian-influenced acrylic paintings and carved wood statues have garnered exposure internationally – from Mexico City to Zurich. His fascination with an industrial existence and its relationship to the human condition creates accessible and collectively biographical environments, many of which toe the line between affectionately sentimental and abstractly harrowing.

A graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute, Jeremy Fish (born 1974, Albany, NY) received his BFA in 1998, and has had solo exhibitions in Mexico City, San Francisco, New York, Laguna Beach and Los Angeles. He has shown in collectives and group shows throughout the world, including Switzerland, Japan and Germany, and has participated in a number of self-developed international "Mobile Art Tours." His work is featured in the permanent collection of the Laguna Art Museum (CA).



Everything Is Going To Be OK?, 2009. Acrylic on Wood, 30 x 60 inches.
Permanent Collection of the Laguna Art Museum.

JEREMY FISH

Interviewed by: Lauren Licata, Mark Moore Gallery

Your work tends to revolve around the tradition of storytelling, in an almost nostalgic manner. Is there an effort on your part to keep the tradition alive? Is storytelling an intrinsically human act?

My mother was an english teacher, and a librarian. My father was an employee relations guy, and his dad a traveling salesman. I learned the importance of telling a good story, and sharing one's life experience through a well-written storybook, or a tall tale when you return home from work. These influences built the structure and need for the storytelling side of my artwork - and yes, I think it is intrinsically human. If you look at the earliest signs of man's art, he wasn't trying to make a pretty picture as much as he was simply trying to tell a tale, to preserve his history, and perhaps teach a lesson on the walls of his cave. We live in an era where everyone wants to text or blog an abbreviated version of their life to you in an "LOL" or a "FTW" sort of way. I hope my work serves to remind people to stop and have a beer with your pals, and to swap some old-fashioned life experience while you still can.

What about your routine use of woodcuts – is this also an engagement with tradition, or more of a contemporary approach, perhaps referring to the material of skateboards?



My mother's dad was a carpenter, and this side of my work carries over from spending my summers in the woodshop with him. I learned to use power tools at a young age and just enjoy the smell and the feel of working with wood. It is a family tradition just as deep as storytelling. I also like the unique finished product of the cut-outs, and the rigidity of the wood surface itself.

In the body of work shown in *Rise of the Underground*, your two-person exhibition with Kenichi Yokono at Mark Moore Gallery, you seem to be dealing with elements of transportation, travel, and urban life – Can you talk about the narratives you focused on for this show? How did the two-person nature of this exhibition affect your process?

This summer my life, and in turn this current body of work, deals with finding a good balance in one's life. There was a lot of change, work, travel, and heartache - but also many new friends, and many stories collected in the process. I haven't had a two-person show in years, so it has allowed me to concentrate on the individual paintings instead of a mural or an installation, as I might do for a solo show. As a result, I was able to invest more in each piece, and I am super happy with the result.

**What kind of process, in general, is involved?
Where do you find your material?**

First, I collect a bunch of loose stories and concepts, usually from personal experience, friends, a random thing I see in the street, or something in a film. Then, I do a pencil sketch based off these ideas. After a round of sketches, I pick the best drawings to become paintings. I get my wood from a friend who works in high end furniture, usually Russian birch, and I order my paint from a company in Los Angeles that produces paint for the animation industry.

What role does music, skateboarding, and the city of San Francisco play in your artwork? Is there an autobiographical component to your storylines?

Music has always played a role in my work. I am a devoted Hip Hop fan. It has always been the background atmosphere for my artwork, and the theme songs to my life as well. Skateboarding was the most important thing in my life for 20 years (almost to the day), and then I broke my ankle, and haven't been as in love with skating ever since. The city of San Francisco is the inspiring backdrop to my life and my art. I live in one of the most amazing neighborhoods in the best city in the world. The stories I paint are sometimes based on things that happen to me, however even when they are, I try and present them in a "Dont-you-hate-when-that-happens?" context, so other folks can hopefully relate to my circumstance.

Are you influenced at all by the Bay Area "Mission School" movement of the 1990s? Who or what do you cite as major artistic influences?

I have always really loved Barry McGee's work, and early Chris Johanson stuff, but I don't identify with the label "Mission School." I was living in San Francisco in the '90s and thought the label to be corny and cliché then, and still do. It's almost as bad as the self-invented "New Mission School," which followed. In my opinion, as soon as you try to label and categorize a contemporary art movement, you can easily kill the true spirit and impact of it.

In contrast to the urban imagery featured in your work, your figuration exclusively depicts animals, which can tend to have a more rural association. How do these creatures factor into your narration? Why the recurring bunnies?

The use of animals in my work is to help illustrate human traits by using the clichés of the animal kingdom. For example, the rabbit is fast, the owl is wise, the mule is stubborn, etc. The bunnies are especially important to me and I have been drawing them, both simple and cartoony, and semi-realistic, since I was in high school. They represent the good times, high spirits, and also my friends and loved ones. The bunnies are my people.

Ideally, what kind of dialogue does your practice provoke? Are there political undertones at work?

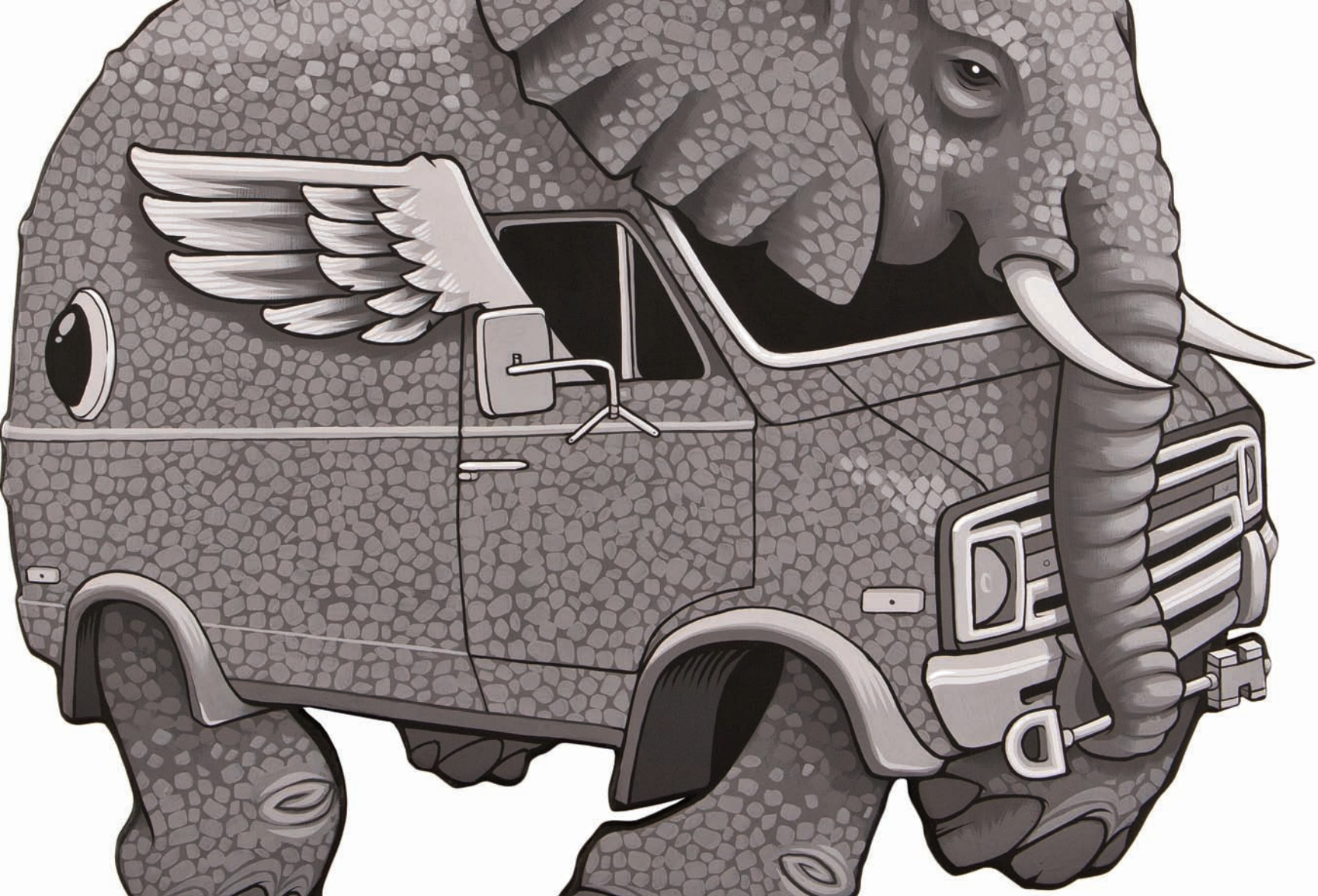
I hope that when someone sees my work and tries to interpret the imagery, they build up their own story based on the pieces I put together. This creates a dialog, where hopefully the imagery provides some answers to life's many puzzles, or at least some basic iconography they can relate to. I try to avoid political themes altogether, and prefer intimate personal tales about real peoples' lives. Politically-driven art can be really great, however I feel far too many artists of my generation use it as a crutch to make their work seem interesting, with very little knowledge of the subject, or relevance. I prefer to not pretend to be any smarter than I am, and my work will follow suit, and remain honest.

Do you have any projects planned for the coming years? Can we expect to see any changes in your work?

Following the show at Mark Moore, I will begin work for a huge solo show here in San Francisco next summer, 2012. I like to pride myself on the fact that my work is always, and has always been changing. For better or worse, I am constantly striving to add new elements, colors, and compositions to my work. My worst nightmare would be to exist as an autopilot artist who continues to make the same repetitive work year after year.



Full Speed, 2009. Acrylic on wood, 20 x 16 inches.



“Fish is an artist who grapples with our modern condition by first exploring places, stories, and legends that have been passed down through generations... He takes us on a journey that encompasses the West and the South, and taps into experiences that are communal and personal all at once.”

— Grace Kook-Anderson,
Curator of Exhibitions, Laguna
Art Museum

Right: *Speed Bumps*, 2009. Acrylic on wood, 16 x 16 inches.

Opposite page: *The Vanimals Freedom*, 2011.
Acrylic on wood, 30 x 25 inches.





Left: *Last Candles of Freedom*, 2009. Acrylic on wood, 16 x 16 inches.



Right: *Choices Made*, 2009. Acrylic on wood, 16 x 16 inches.



Country Grass Is Greener, 2009.
Acrylic on wood, hand-carved frame, 36 x 24 inches.



City Grass Is Greener, 2009.
Acrylic on wood, hand-carved frame, 36 x 24 inches.

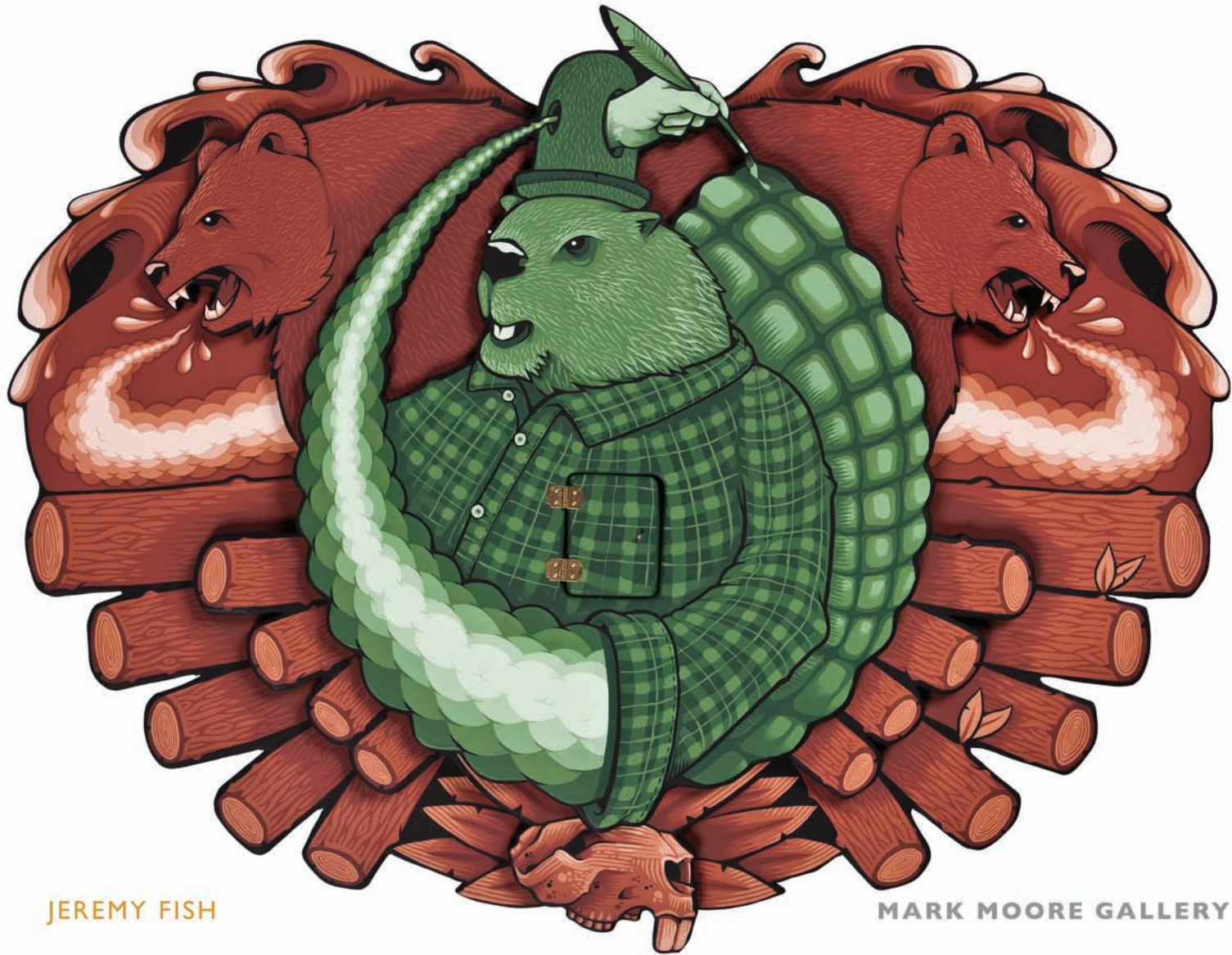


Badger Hunter Skull, 2010. Wood on acrylic, 12 x 12 inches.



Handling Things, 2009. Wood on acrylic, 18 x 18 inches.

Opposite Page: *Build A Strong Dam Foundation, 2010. Acrylic on wood, 36 x 30 inches.*



JEREMY FISH

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The Epidemic, 2009. Hand-carved wood statue.



The Plague, 2009. Hand-carved wood statue.

“...Somewhere between full-blown, howling death and a basket of newborn kittens exists a climate where the malice and the mirth can mingle... It is the recognition and exploitation of this tension that immediately drew me to the work of upstate New York-born, San Francisco-based artist Jeremy Fish.”

—Aesop Rock

Bearly in Brazil, 2011.
Acrylic on wood, 36 x 26 inches.





Freedom, 2010. Acrylic on wood, 12 x 18 inches.



Meine Kleine Ente, 2010. Acrylic on wood, 12 x 18 inches.



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Love Ones Lost, 2009. Acrylic on wood, 36 x 36 inches.



Wizard's Sleeve, 2009. Acrylic on wood, 16 x 16 inches.

“Jeremy has become one of fine art’s most renowned storytellers.”

— Evan Pricco, *Juxtapoz Magazine*, 2010

“Fish uses animals in his work with an Orwellian sensibility, a medium to express the complexities of human characters. No animal portrays a simple innocence, and none suffer utopian illusions.”

— Grace Kook-Anderson, Curator of Exhibitions, Laguna Art Museum

Bare Hugs, 2011.
Acrylic on wood, 24 x 20 inches.





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Industrial Ghosts 1: Film, 2009. Acrylic on wood
& hand-carved frame, 19 x 16 inches.



Industrial Ghosts 2: Print, 2009. Acrylic on wood
& hand-carved frame, 19 x 16 inches.



Industrial Ghosts 3: Auto, 2009. Acrylic on wood
& hand-carved frame, 19 x 16 inches.



Dudeadler, 2010. Acrylic on wood, 12 x 18 inches.



Stuck In Wyoming, 2010. Acrylic on wood, 12 x 18 inches.



Polish Grannies, 2010. Acrylic on wood, 36 x 24 inches.

BIO

Jeremy Fish

Born 1974, Albany, NY

Lives and works in San Francisco, CA

Education

1994 Associates Degree in Fine Arts, Junior College of Albany New York

1998 Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts, San Francisco Art Institute

Solo Exhibitions

2010 The Road Less Traveled: Mobile Art Tour 2010, Various cities.

2009 Weathering the Storm, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA
Nature Studies, 5024mx Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico
The Ambush, Fecal Face Dot Gallery, San Francisco, CA

2008 Ghosts of the Barbara Coast, 5024sf Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Seasons of Change, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, NY

2007 Romeantic Delusions, Rome, Italy
Sink or Swim, White Walls Gallery, San Francisco, CA

2006 Little Creatures, Scott Musgrove @ Lineage Gallery,
Philadelphia, PA
The Next Best Thing, 5024sf Gallery San Francisco, CA
Folklore, Space 1026, Philadelphia, PA

Two Person Exhibitions

2011 *Jeremy Fish & Kenichi Yokono: Rise of the Underground*, Mark
Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA

Selected Group Exhibitions

2006 Low Tech High Life, The Art Prostitute Gallery, Dallas, TX

2005 Wordless 2: Annual Group Show, temporary space, Zurich,
Switzerland
Urban Edge, temporary space, Milan, Italy

2004 Get In The Van, mobile art tour. Various locations across the
U.S.

Beams show, temporary space, Tokyo, Japan
Wordless 1: Annual Group Show, temporary space, Zurich,
Switzerland

Now Underground, Central Train Station, Milan, Italy

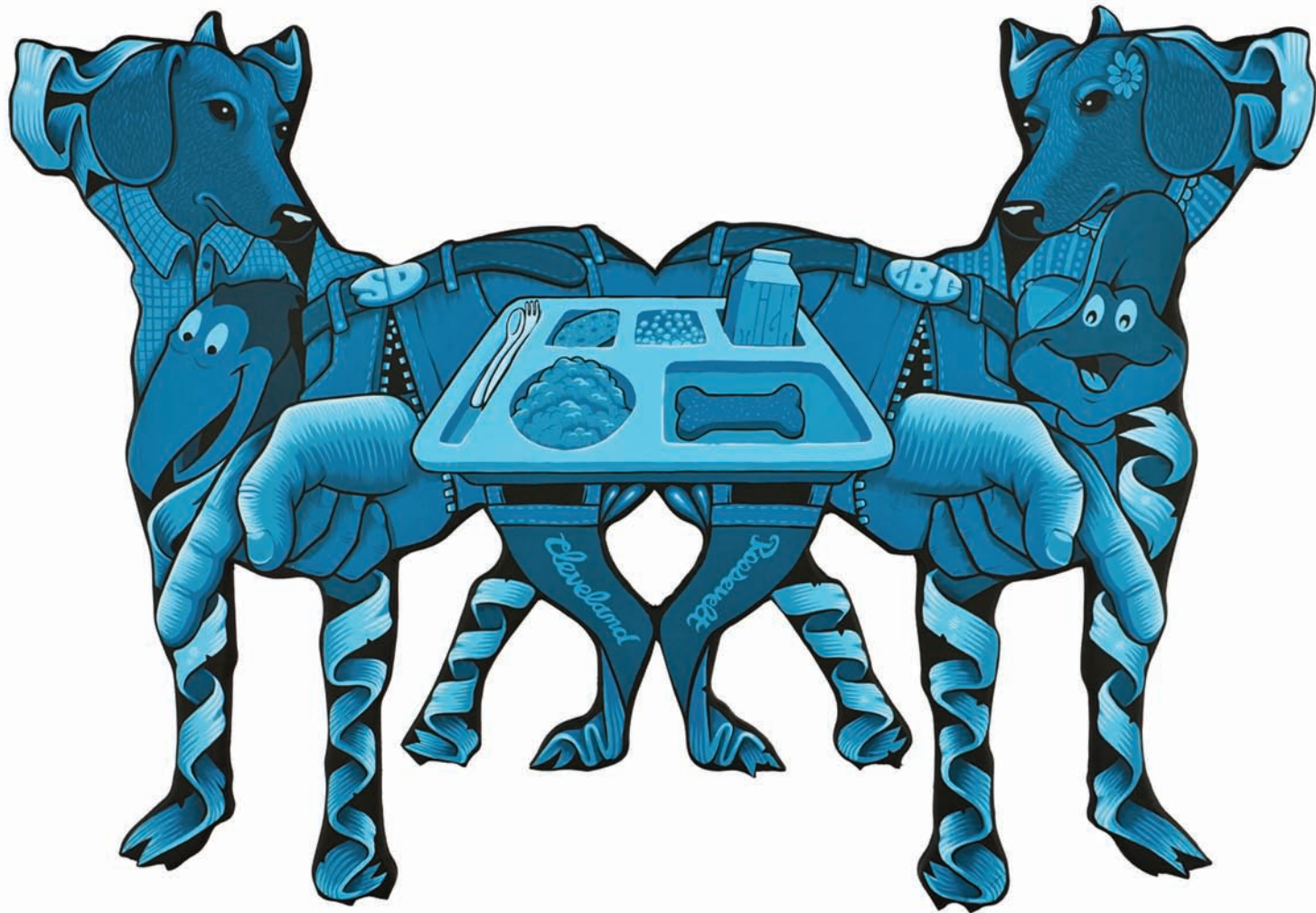
Modart Ispo Exhibition, temporary space, Munich, Germany

Selected Lectures

2007 CCA, San Francisco, CA

SFAI, San Francisco, CA

2006 DSV, Dallas, TX



Pulled Out My Worm (as told by Snoop Dogg), 2011. Acrylic on wood, 24 x 36 inches.

Below: *Native Ghosts*, 2009. Acrylic on wood, 16 x 16 inches.

Front Cover: *Wooden Wisdom of the Natives* (Detail), 2011. Acrylic on wood, 22 x 36 inches.

Back Cover: *Jet Luggage* (Detail), 2011. Acrylic on wood, 32 x 21 inches.



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