

## PRESENTS



Image: Jane Benson, "Naked Swan", 2006

JANE BENSON

The Chronicles of Narcissism

October 20 – November 25, 2006

Opening Reception:  
Friday, October 20, 6-8pm

Black & White Gallery is very pleased to present *The Chronicles of Narcissism* by Jane Benson.

Benson's first solo show at Black & White Gallery includes a new body of sculptural and installation-based works examining the construction of beauty and the role narcissism plays in contemporary culture. Integrating mirrored surfaces into installations and sculptural objects – swans, furniture, clothing, and globes – the work expresses the inescapable tensions between superficial beauty and the emptiness beneath the surface, natural and artificial forms of beauty, and the precariousness of identifying too strongly with appearances and status.

After an extensive sculptural inquiry into nature as expressed in the aesthetics of foliage, Benson's upcoming exhibition engages with animal forms, marking an important shift from flora to fauna as her subject matter. The protagonists in Benson's richly iconic and narrativistic project are more culpable than in her previous works, expounding on the dynamics at play within the ecological world, which also doubles as a metaphor for human relations that involve the delicate matters of ego, self image, and the perception of beauty.

The centerpiece of *The Chronicles of Narcissism* is *Naked Swan* (2006), which charts the journey of a plucked swan who is perched on a makeshift raft, unable to make contact with his own image. The frozen moment, before the possibility for narcissism sets in speaks of a desire to delay self-obsession, suspending the swan's moment of innocence and vulnerability. Additionally exhibited are recent paintings and works on paper which integrate tar and gold leaf, a combination of materials are new to Benson's artistic practice. Overall the range of materials and forms address the contradictions implicit in narcissism – self obsession and self loathing, the impossibility of true reflection, loss of innocence through self-realization, and the politics of loss related to environmental excess, among others.

Jane Benson's sculptures and site-specific installations have been exhibited in solo and group shows at many different venues, including P.S.1 (Greater New York), Queens Museum of Art, Socrates Sculpture Park, the Sculpture Center in Long Island City, NY and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia as well as in many galleries throughout the United States and her native England.

Benson is a recipient of many distinguished awards such as the Fulbright Scholarship (1998-2000), Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and World Financial Center Arts & Events Residency Program (2002-3), Emerging Artists Fellowship, Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, Queens, NY (2003) and the Pollack-Krasner Foundation Grant (2005).

Jane Benson holds a BA degree from Edinburgh College of Art and an MFA degree from School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

For more information and to request images, please contact the gallery:  
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