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Gallery Hours: Wednesday to Friday, 11am-5pm, Saturday, 11am-3pm, and by appointment

Present-Day Oracles

Artists revive the ancient role of art as a tool for spiritual guidance and mystical reflection

Washington, DC – The *Joan Hisaoka Healing Arts Gallery* is honored to announce the **January 11, 2013** opening of *Present-Day Oracles*, featuring the evocative works of Anne Bouie, Gale Jamieson, Michael Platt, and Patricia Underwood.

Present-Day Oracles will run from **January 11 to February 23, 2013**, with the **Opening Reception on Friday, January 11, 7 to 9pm**. Please also join us for the **Artists' Talk on Saturday, January 26 at 4pm** as the participating artists delve into their personal relationships with ritual and mystical symbolism, followed by a short reception. For more images of works visit www.smithcenter.org/gallery.

Today we often experience art objects housed in the monolithic walls of a museum, monitored by uniformed guards and security sensors. We self-consciously lean in closer to glimpse the indexical imprint of the artist's brush upon the paint and to feel close to the moment of inspiration... only to be audibly jolted away by a shocking alarm. It's exactly these jarring encounters that enable us to forget that our original and historical relationship with the fine art object was quite the opposite; before the advent of modernism, the function and purpose of art was rather to bring us closer to one another, our common truths, and to guide us in our search for meaning and relationship with the divine – however it may have been conceived.



Our ancient ancestors utilized art objects during rituals and oral storytelling as tools for navigating and leading us into the mystical realms. Works contained symbols and narratives that went beyond the mundane, communicating our shared cultural myths and inspiring our consciousness to grapple with the unknown.

By extension, the creators or artists of these sacred objects were considered spiritual mentors, guiding participants on transcendent pilgrimages. Albeit quite rare in our secular art world today, there are still artists whose intent is to imbue their artworks with the energy and substance of reliquary works. In this thought-provoking exhibition, **Anne Bouie, Gale Jamieson, Michael Platt, and Patricia Underwood** serve as modern-day oracles – using various mediums and aesthetic approaches to conjure our lost sense of sacred in the present.

Platt and Jamieson take an abstract approach, while Underwood and Bouie specifically resurrect ancient symbols and forms. Platt's life-size prints almost physically thrust us into his alluring dreamscapes by complexly fusing otherworldly subjects and places, and Jamieson's use of commonplace materials seems to manifest the divine right at our feet. Meanwhile, in Underwood's delicate mixed media prints she revives the fading symbols of the Arawak people, and in Bouie's multifaceted *Code & Reliquary* series she weaves various archetypal symbols and forms of pre- and post-conversion cultures to retell and reconnect us with collective cultural myths. Together these present-day oracles reclaim the original intent of the art object as an aura-laden tool for mystical guidance and, in doing so, reacquaint us with our lost sense of ritual.

IMAGE: Gale Jamieson's *Requiem, the Wild Rose*

Special thanks to our Exhibition Sponsor, TD Bank, & Wine Sponsor, Majestic Fine Wines:



About: The *Joan Hisaoka Healing Arts Gallery* is a nonprofit arts space dedicated to exhibiting fine art exploring the innate connection between healing and creativity. Exhibitions feature contemporary artists addressing significant issues, such as spirituality, multiculturalism, and health. The gallery is a part of *Smith Center for Healing and the Arts*, a health, education, and arts organization that provides deep healing resources to people living with cancer, their families, and caregivers.