

## Mark Turgeon

Curated by Nicole Eisenman

October 18 – December 1, 2007

(Opening reception: Thursday, October 18, 6:00 – 8:00pm)

“...the painting’s surfaces are just so unbelievably beautiful, flat, raw and seductive. But it is Mark’s deep political, spiritual and moral feelings that determine the content of his paintings, everything symbolizes something else, you enter into a maze of meaning, which is at times mystical, unsettled and often starkly political.”

– Nicole Eisenman



*Sisters of Mercy*, 2006  
Pigment on wall compound  
20" x 16"

Still life imagery, much of it referencing both foreign and familiar curios—treasured artifacts found in the artist’s home— form the point of departure for Mark Turgeon’s recent series of eighty 20” x 16” and two large-scale fresco paintings on view at CUE. Accompanying the paintings is a selection of more than half a dozen soccer jerseys representing different countries. Each are emblazoned with the artist’s own visual and text-based statements, many of which point to specific transgressions that have occurred in the name of national pride. Throughout the works on view, visual elements referring to real world, literary, and mythic events recede and advance out of the picture plane to form an intricate *pas de deux* between fantasy and reality.

Since the early 1990s, Turgeon has worked with a variety of different materials and techniques, with styles ranging from abstract expressionist portraiture to delicate floral watercolor. After an extended trip to Italy in 1998, he began experimenting with different forms of Fresco. His technique involves applying pure pigment to wall compound laid down on canvas, spraying the surface with water as he works, and then applying more layers of pigment. Fueled by the desire to posit history within a modern context, his processes are steeped in the artisan hand-made traditions of painting, weaving, sign making, carving and plastering.

The broad variety of themes and imagery on view provides a wealth of cues for understanding Turgeon’s paintings. Moreover, the poetic titles of his pictures provide further clues surrounding his critical thinking. For example, a world of appearances is deconstructed layer by layer in *The Birds and the Bees with the World on their Knees on a Dollar a Day*, 2007. Here, Turgeon juxtaposes imagery taken from a protest poster advocating for peace in Darfur against a similar type of street poster advertising the latest virtual reality war game. In the foreground, a wobbly chessboard is festooned with escalating currencies in place of pieces. On this metaphorical playing field stands a single praying mantis pushing a globe through the center of the galaxy.

Seamlessly oscillating between past and present, Turgeon intricately weaves together a myriad of words and places, objects and images into intricate visual samplers that lyrically reveal his observations and concerns about the current state of world and the human condition.



*The Birds and the Bees with the World on their Knees on a Dollar a Day*, 2007. Pigment on wall compound, 20"x 16"

For additional information, please contact Ryan White, Programs Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email [ryan.white@cueartfoundation.org](mailto:ryan.white@cueartfoundation.org)

*Catalogue available.*

## **ARTIST'S BIO:**

Mark Turgeon received his BFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 1987, and has spent most of the past twenty years as an artist rooted in New York City. He has had solo exhibitions at the Knitting Factory, New York, NY, 1988; The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, NY, 1997 and the Dillon Gallery, New York, NY, 1999. Other group exhibitions include the M.S. Gallery, Hartford, CT; Paul Mellon Arts Center at Choate School, Wallingford, CT; Bucheon Gallery, San Francisco, CA; and Allan Stone Gallery, Grand Salon, Jack Tilton Gallery, Postmasters, and Esso Gallery in New York, NY. He has organized and been part of a number of spoken word/performance evenings in places such as CB's 313 Gallery; Fallen Angels Erotic Cabaret; Bell Café and McGovern's Bar. In collaboration with Edisa Weeks/Delirious Dance Co., he created two window box performances for Chashama Theatre. He has created sets and props and posters and significant graphics for many of his friends' theatre companies, and film projects.

## **ABOUT CUE:**

*CUE Art Foundation, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit forum for contemporary art and cultural exchange between artists and the public. CUE gives artists, students, scholars and arts professionals resources at many stages of their careers and creative lives. Our programs include exhibitions, studio residencies, publications, professional development seminars, educational outreach, symposia, readings and performances. Since 2002, we have operated from our 4,500 square foot storefront venue in New York's Chelsea Arts District.*

*CUE Art Foundation's operations and programs are made possible with the generous support of foundations, corporations, government agencies, individuals and its membership. Programming assistance is provided by: Accademia Charitable Foundation, Ltd., American Express Company, Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The Sam & Adele Golden Foundation for the Arts, Inc., Compass Group International, The Greenwall Foundation, Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, Inc., Joan Mitchell Foundation, Peter Norton Family Foundation, The Viking Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, Joe and Beth Massoud, The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency.*

