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Robert Fishko, *Director*

NATHANIEL ARIC GALKA

[b. 1975]

American

“Through a universal visual language, my paintings are fables created to communicate moral lessons about how we treat the world in which we exist. Fables are timeless devices to deliver, in a simple manner, what can be understood and enjoyed by viewers of all ages. The fable is one of the oldest and most lasting method of storytelling that is easily communicated through fictional examples with the main characters being plants, animals, birds, and insects.

These non-human characters exist as human-like entities but still retain their own characteristics giving purpose to why they are chosen for my narratives. For example, the bee symbolizes new beginnings, hard work, and wisdom. Hares are associated with the circle of life, and by extension, with spring, renewal, and immortality. Fawns represent the innocence and purity of youth.

As an artist, I present my narrative in a number of ways using a series of images that represent moments in a story or by selecting a central moment to stand for the story in its entirety. Unlike the traditional fable, I invent my own storylines leaving the viewer to imagine the narrative.

As evident in every one of my paintings, the title is the introduction to the fable that I have presented for the viewer to create their own story.”

- Nathaniel Aric Galka

Nathaniel Aric Galka earned his B.F.A. from Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio (1998), and his M.F.A. from Northwestern University, IL with a full scholarship and fellowship (2001). Over the course of his career, Galka has been given more than thirty solo exhibitions at venues across the country, from New York City to Chicago (IL), Knoxville (TN), Atlanta (GA), Asheville (NC), Palos Verdes (CA), and Kent (CT). He has been shown in sixty group exhibitions across the country, and abroad in Italy and Dubai.

Galka’s whimsical paintings are captivating, drawing the viewer into a fanciful land where animals, birds, bees and other insects have seemingly formed comradeships in a post-human world still reeling from the devastation mankind left behind. The message unveiled through the utterly beautiful world Galka conjures, is one of optimism that hope and renewal may be achieved.

Galka's choice of painting support is jute, the production of which he notes is the least harmful to the environment. Wrapping the jute around panel in a nod to the technique of Renaissance masters, Galka primes his surfaces with many layers of marble plaster made with Carrara marble powder mixed with titanium white pigment. His compositions emerge from hundreds of layers of oil paint and ink. As he adds elements to the composition, the story, and the message it will ultimately impart, unfolds in a spontaneous manner. With carefully placed notes of gold leaf added to the ends of bare branches (seemingly victims of environmental devastation and stripped of their foliage), Galka completes the painting with his message that beauty and life will prevail. Galka varnishes the painting and then applies a layer of cold wax, which can be buffed to a sheen or allowed to soften to a matte finish with time. The sides of the jute, which is nailed to the panel, are finished with a wash of gold that shimmers when it catches the light.

Galka's involved painting technique results in paintings that emanate the feeling that one has discovered a lost antique, a rare and beautiful artifact of an otherworldly experience from which lessons about caring for our fellow inhabitants and our environment on this planet may be learned, if one is open to receiving them.

Creativity and beauty are a rite of passage for us – Nathaniel Aric Galka