

# Marlborough

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## SAMY BENMAYOR *FORBIDDEN PLEASURES*

### MARLBOROUGH GALLERY

May 6-June 7, 2008

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to present the New York debut exhibition of work by Samy Benmayor, an artist who hails from Santiago, Chile and has shown broadly in South America and Europe. Consisting of approximately twenty works on paper from 2007, this show captures the essence of Benmayor's art: generous, humorous and historically astute.

The works in the exhibition are acrylic and ink on digital monoprint and acrylic, watercolor and ink on paper. Benmayor collages references from high and low culture: Renaissance and Pop art, Massaccio and Picasso, and American cartoons such as Archie, Superman and Woody Woodpecker. Frequently these are layered together and then photographed, the resulting print becoming the ground for extensive painting with ink and acrylic. A complex combination of the concrete and the abstract, the artist's works are webs of images with recognizable individual forms and archetypal symbols interwoven with abstract patterns of color.

Benmayor's brush stroke plays an important role in his work, ranging from vigorous gesture to ink wash to calligraphic lines. Benmayor's, *The Witness*, 2007 (acrylic and ink on digital monoprint: 31 x 47 in., 80.5 x 120 cm) clearly demonstrates the artist's range of technique and approach to a single work of art. Here he applies ink wash and black acrylic paint over a monoprint that includes imagery from cartoons and Renaissance painting. Featuring a slightly comic squeezed building leaning to one side and various characters (a painter at an easel, doodled figures, an orange-faced man wearing a beret), this work is ironically stamped with an official-looking seal that reads "Biblioteca Nacional Samy Benmayor". Another element of humor in Benmayor's work may be found in his serial treatment of the cow, which appears in numerous works as a bemused protagonist, vaguely Picassoid but entirely different in character from the Spanish artist's aggressive bull. In *The Teaching of Classical Art*, 2007 (acrylic and ink on digital monoprint: 31 x 47 in., 80.5 x 120 cm) and *Department of Education*, 2007 (acrylic and ink on digital monoprint: 31 x 47 in., 80.5 x 120 cm), the cow is the central figure of the visual drama, seemingly walking through the picture plane and outside of it.

Adriana Valdés discusses Benmayor's approach in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition: "...Benmayor travels with the entire history of art on his back. But how lightly he carries his burden! He has turned it into toys, available to distribute about the surfaces on which he is working, along with clippings, graphic souvenirs, architectural plans – whatever turns up and blends in. The freedom is that of one with a sense of humor – someone who is capable of laughing at everything because he began by laughing at himself."

Born in Santiago, Chile in 1956, Benmayor currently lives and works in Santiago de Chile. He studied Art at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Santiago, graduating in 1980. He is a recipient of fellowships from the U.S. Information Agency and Fund for Artists Colonies as well as from the Djerassi Foundation, Woodside, California. Benmayor's most recent solo exhibitions have been held at Galería A.M.S. Marlborough, Santiago in 2007 and at the Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago in 2006.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be available at the time of the exhibition.

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