

Overflow

A visual feast of sensuality and beauty

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Laconia Gallery presents *Overflow*, featuring the work of Sara Hairston-Medice, Mary O'Malley, and Resa Blatman. Artists' reception: Friday, October 3, 2008, 5:30-8pm
Laconia Gallery, 433 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02118 · www.laconiagallery.org

BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 2008—Laconia Gallery presents *Overflow*, showcasing the work of three Somerville artists who explore the sublime in the art of wildness and excess. The exhibit runs from October 3 to November 22, 2008. All three artists will be present at the opening on Friday, October 3rd from 5:30 to 8pm. *Overflow* marks the first group exhibition curated by Resa Blatman.

In *Overflow*, artists Sara Hairston-Medice, Mary O'Malley, and Resa Blatman investigate the essence of beauty and nature. Through the use of knitted sculpture, Hairston-Medice produces a complex group of yarn "paintings" and sculptures. Form grows on form in a seemingly meiotic process. Hanging lace and swirling interwoven shapes allude to reproductive organs, the decorative, and oceanic imagery. The work is overly feminine and out of control—colorful and intensive displays. The tropes of her chosen mediums (yarn, thread, fabric, etc.) are an integral part of Hairston-Medice's inspiration, and she transforms these traditional media from their utilitarian roots into images and objects altogether stranger and more complex. O'Malley creates highly detailed drawings that suggest micro/macro studies of nature. The tightly rendered forms and lines are ambiguous; they are tangled together in a process of evolving and multiplying. They exist somewhere between the wild irrationality of nature and the rigorous order of mechanized patterns. These landscapes hold a tension between the seen and unseen and between fantasy and reality, creating a topography that is vast, ephemeral, and ever growing. Blatman's paintings play with the contradictions of lush versus barren and rapture versus displeasure. Her lavishly painted flora, fauna, berries, and birds seduce the viewer with a bounty of feminine ripeness and sensuality. Life abounds in these beautified worlds, yet the ornamental invasive patterns creep into the juicy environments of the birds, and, along with the heaps and mounds of eggs, they create a picture of fecundity with undertones of wanting and dismay.

In a time of mass-production and ultra-consumption, Resa Blatman takes great satisfaction in curating a group exhibition that is work-intensive and emotionally engaging. These three artists find their inspiration in the 18th century, when decoration, beauty, and appreciation of nature were highlights in art and interior design. *Overflow* is not a show about casual or haphazard art-making where concept takes precedence over execution. Instead, the work in this show combines the intensity and mystery of an otherworldly allure. While these artists are aware that beauty and decoration are often marginalized in contemporary art, they do not cave in to the nay-sayers. Instead they relish the opportunity to create dizzying moments of loveliness which are still tinged with dark undertones. Their work asks the viewer to linger—to savor—the tiny, yet sumptuous details, elegant lines, and intentional marks within each piece. In our fast-paced culture, hand-made, patiently rendered work has become a rarity. In *Overflow* more is *more*—the work on exhibit celebrates all that is lush and wild—but this bold approach is informed by the meticulous formal skills of all three artists. Painstakingly rendered, the sculptures, drawings, and paintings move beyond a surface aesthetic to create a profound and disturbing beauty.

All three artists have earned MFAs in Painting: Hairston-Medice from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1999; O'Malley from the School of Visual Arts, New York, 2005; and Blatman from Boston University, 2006. O'Malley is a recipient of the Somerville LCC Grant ('08), the MCC Grant ('07), and the St. Botolph's Grant ('06); Blatman is a recipient of the Blanche E. Colman Award ('08), and the Somerville LCC Grant ('08). The artists show their work regularly throughout the U.S. and have exhibited in Europe.