

Kara Maria

Haywire

September 12, 2015 – October 17, 2015

Join us for an opening reception

with the artist

on Saturday September 12,

from 2 – 5 pm



Kara Maria, *Crow* (2015); Acrylic on canvas; 46 x 72 inches

San Francisco, CA: Catharine Clark Gallery presents *Haywire*, an exhibition of new work by Bay Area artist Kara Maria. On view September 12 – October 17, 2015, *Haywire* features paintings which blend abstract and representational traditions in a visual dialogue about the bizarre, precarious, and yet alluring state of our environment.

Maria's latest body of work brings to the fore her talent for borrowing from the broad vocabulary of contemporary painting, blending geometric shapes, vivid hues, brush marks and stains with flashes of representational elements to address social and environmental dilemmas. The animal subjects in *Haywire* range from the reviled to the revered— and convey an edgy vibe about the convoluted state of the natural world. Paintings completed during her 2015 Recology Artist Residency feature creatures as

common and abased as the trash heaps in which they thrive—rats, mice, seagulls, crows and raccoons. In contrast, the awe-inspiring Polar Bear, Black Rhinoceros and African Penguin in her newest works are rare and exotic, endangered or near extinct. All the animals, both those that humans abhor, and those we yearn to save, are portrayed with equal inherent poise, beauty, and penetrating presence. Her figures pose complicated questions about what humans value and why. The gravity of waste and hypocrisy, and the irony of creating habitat for what we revile and killing what we treasure, is heavy in *Haywire*. Yet Maria possesses a unique ability in her abstract aesthetic to liberate space, depict expansion, fragmentation, folding and growth, giving the work lightness and humor. There is room in *Haywire* for viewers to imagine a narrative without a foregone conclusion.

The physical environment and materials accessed by Maria at Recology are key elements in the artist's latest innovations with abstraction. Using found stretched canvases, including amateur paintings and digitally printed, mass produced artwork from IKEA, Maria overpainted the works with recycled acrylic paint from the Household Hazardous Waste program. The disjointed shapes and vibrant colors reflect the churning and frenetic environment of the sorting facility. Literally using trash as her canvas, Maria incorporates familiar influences from the 1970s pop-culture of her childhood such as Lite Brite, Colorforms, Spirograph camouflage patterns and Japanese graphic novels. She captures repetition and rhythm, often using comic book imagery to represent the invisible—sound, surprise, shock. The original works in *Haywire* reflect Maria's tenacious refusal to be constrained by any one painting discipline, and her acute eye for the turbulent and disquieting connections between humans and nature.

Kara Maria | *Haywire*

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Reception: Saturday, September 12, 2 – 5 pm, Artist talk 3:00 pm.

Media inquiries: marketing@cclarkgallery.com

Kara Maria: is a visual artist working in painting and mixed media. Pushing the limits of sensational imagery, her work reflects on highly charged political topics—feminism, war, the environment. Her subject matter has included small renderings of various cuts of meat, interventions in acrylic paint on vintage handkerchiefs and pornographic playing cards, and large-scale, pop-inspired paintings. Maria's approach employs a brightly colored palette that serves as an inviting façade to the political critique and environmental concerns manifested in her images of nuclear reactors, military weapons, pornographic figures, and radiation symbols. Kara Maria received her BA and MFA from the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley). She has exhibited work in solo and group shows throughout the United States at venues including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Cantor Center at Stanford University; the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, Texas; the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; and the Katonah Museum of Art in New York, among many others. Her work has garnered critical attention in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Art in America*. Maria has been awarded artist residencies at the Montalvo Arts Center, Recology Artist in Residence Program, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and at the de Young's Artist Studio. She has been a recipient of many awards and honors, including a Jury Award from Artadia, an Eisner Prize in Art from UC Berkeley, and the Masterminds Grant from SF Weekly. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento; the San Jose Museum of Art; the de Saisset Museum at Santa Clara University; the di Rosa in Napa; Mills College Art Museum in Oakland; and the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, among others. In 2015, Maria had a solo exhibition at the Reynolds Gallery at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. In 2016, she will have solo exhibition at the University Art Gallery at California State University, Chico; a catalogue of the exhibition will be published. Kara Maria lives and works in San Francisco, and has exhibited with Catharine Clark Gallery since 2001.