

## Alison Saar Foison and Fallow

15 September through 30 October 2010

Opening reception for the artist:

Wednesday 15 September, 6-8 p.m.

**Venice, CA** — L.A. Louver is pleased to announce an exhibition of new three-dimensional mixed media works on paper and sculpture by **Alison Saar**. In this new work Saar explores the cycle of birth, maturation, death and regeneration through the changing season and her own experience of aging.

The two drawings *Foison*, 2010 and *Fallow*, 2010, which also give their titles to the exhibition, derive from Saar's recent fascination with early anatomy illustration. As Saar has stated "The artists of the time seemed compelled to breathe life back into the cadavers, depicting them dancing with their entrails, their skin draped over their arm like a cloak, or fetuses blooming from their mother's womb." In these drawings, Saar has replaced the innards of the figures with incongruous elements, to create a small diorama: *Foison*, 2010 depicts ripe, fruitful cotton balls and their nemesis the cotton moth, in caterpillar, chrysalis and mature moth stage; while *Fallow*, 2010 portrays a fallow fawn fetus entwined in brambles. In creating these works Saar references and reexamines her early work that often featured figures with "cabinets" in their chest containing relics of their life.



Alison Saar  
*Fallow*, 2010  
 mixed media

55 1/2 x 29 x 1 in. (141 x 73.7 x 2.5 cm)

*My work has always dealt with dualities -- usually of the wild, feral side in battle with the civil self  
 -----Alison Saar*

One of two sculptures in the exhibition, *En Pointe*, 2010 depicts a figure hanging by her feet and sprouting massive bronze antlers. The figure seems trapped in limbo between two states of being: both en pointe (a term used in ballet meaning "on toe") and animated, and yet a mature being constrained by massive antlers that signify the encumbrances and constraints of age.

The second form, *Fall*, 2010 is a woman with branches growing like hair out of her head. The branches have no leaves, but bear a smattering of pomegranates; some whole, some split. This piece is from a series of works in which Saar depicts the seasons, and through which she examines the myth of Persephone and the four stages of women's maturation. In Greek legend, Persephone was the daughter of Zeus and Demeter, and embodied the earth's fertility. Abducted by Hades, Persephone was forced to live in the underworld. Demeter was so saddened that her mourning turned the earth fallow. This incited Zeus to grant Persephone her release, on condition that no food had passed her lips. However, in a



Alison Saar  
*Fall Study*, 2010  
mixed media  
55 1/2 x 30 1/4 in. (141 x 76.8 cm)

ruse to ensure her continued captivity, Hades tricked Persephone into eating the seeds of a pomegranate. But Zeus and Hades soon wrought a compromise under which Persephone was permitted to live six months on earth and six months in the underworld. Therein lies the origin of the seasons, and the pomegranate as symbol of fertility.

Alison Saar was born and raised in Laurel Canyon, California. The daughter of renowned artist Betye Saar and painter/conservator Richard Saar, Alison and her sisters (the artist Lezley and writer Tracye) were encouraged to pursue their love of art through books and family museum visits. During high school, Saar assisted her father with his restoration work and came into close contact with a spectrum of cultural artifacts. Through her handling of works that ranged from Chinese frescoes and Egyptians mummies, to Pre-Columbian and African art, Saar earned an appreciation of, and insight into, a diversity of materials, techniques and cultural aesthetics. Saar received her B.A. degree in studio art and art history in 1978 from Scripps College, Claremont, California, where she studied with noted art historian Dr. Samella Lewis. She went on to earn her MFA from Otis-Parsons Institute (now Otis College of Art and Design). Saar has been artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York City, in 1983; Roswell Museum of Art, New Mexico, in 1985; Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C., in 1986; and Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire in 2003. She has received three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1984, 1985 and 1988), and was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1989, and Flintridge Foundation Award for Visual Artists in 2000. Saar's work may be found in many public collections, including the High Museum, Atlanta; Walker Institute, Minneapolis; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art (where it was included in the 1993 Biennial), New York. Commissioned by the City of New York. Alison Saar's 13 feet high bronze sculpture of abolitionist Harriet Tubman was dedicated in November 2008 at the crossroads of St. Nicholas Avenue, Frederick Douglass Boulevard and 122nd street in Harlem, New York.

Concurrent to the artist's exhibition at L.A. Louver, **Alison Saar: Bound for Glory** is on view at The Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon, 7 September through 12 December 2010. A fully illustrated catalogue, with text by Linda Tesner and an interview with Alison Saar, accompanies the exhibition.

**First Floor Gallery**  
**Michael McMillen:** *Lighthouse* is a multi-media installation that includes digital motion picture, and unique sculptures and painting. Long awaited, this is the artist's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles in over six years.

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### **Skyroom**

**Mark di Suvero: sculpture**

For more information and visuals, please contact Elizabeth East, L.A. Louver, 45 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA, USA; [www.lalouer.com](http://www.lalouer.com); tel: 310-822-4955; fax: 310-821-7529; e-mail: [Elizabeth@lalouer.com](mailto:Elizabeth@lalouer.com)

