

Darren Waterston

Forest Eater

November 3 - December 24, 2011

Opening reception with the artist, Thursday, November 3, 2011, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm



Fissure Vents, 2011, Oil on linen, Panel: 24 x 30 inches

Darren Waterston's *Forest Eater* explores the mystical and phenomenological aspects of volcanoes through paintings, sculptures and works on paper, a project inspired by a recent residency in Honolulu. Presented in its entirety at both the Contemporary Museum and Honolulu Academy of Arts earlier this year, Haines Gallery is pleased to exhibit a selection of these works that demonstrate the artist's intimate engagement with the landscape of Hawaii.

The title refers to the Hawaiian legend of Pele - ancient goddess of fire, lightning, and volcanoes - who still holds a prominent place in the collective imagination of many contemporary Hawaiians. Pele represents both the destructive and creative forces of all volcanic activity, simultaneously taking and giving life. She is *Ka wahine 'ai honua*: "the woman who devours the land."

The paintings and works on paper move between abstracted and pictorial representations of Pele and the Hawaiian landscape, depicting not a tropical paradise but a more evocative, haunting portrait of the islands. Throughout Waterston's work

there is a tension between control and chaos, between the deliberative nature of intentional mark making and the unanticipated consequences of impulsive and expressive gesture. This inherent quality resonates not only with the paintings and works on paper, but also within the sculptures from this body of work. These place based pieces evoke the visceral materiality of molten lava and incorporate actual elements from the environment that inspired the works, including shells, earth and branches.

Waterston's paintings, watercolors and murals have been exhibited internationally and are included in such museum collections as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Seattle Art Museum and Portland Art Museum. He has previously been the recipient of the Richard C. Diebenkorn Teaching Fellowship at the San Francisco Art Institute, and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation Fellowship in Umbertide, Italy, where he was an artist in residence in 2005. This is Waterston's seventh exhibition with Haines Gallery.