

George Boorujy

Passenger

November 6 – December 20, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 6, 6-8 pm



P·P·O·W is pleased to present *Passenger*, an exhibition of new work by George Boorujy. The exhibition will expand upon Boorujy's ongoing exploration of North America through a series of strikingly life-like, ink on paper depictions of animals native to this continent. Drawing on the longstanding tradition of artists and naturalists composing highly realistic renderings of life on earth, Boorujy creates works that advance this practice, imbuing his subjects with human-like expression and encouraging a relationship between the work and the viewer.

Intrigued by the division that has emerged between humans and their natural surroundings, Boorujy has created a series of large-scale drawings that re-evaluate the way in which we see animals and encourage us to grapple with the impact that we have on our environment. Taken together his works represent an exploration of what North America has come to represent and how we fit into our contemporary landscape.

With *Passenger* Boorujy turns his eye to the notion of movement, transference, and the changes that followed in the wake of the Columbian Exchange. After 1492, the landscape, animals, and people of North America were forever altered, with some species prospering while others were wiped off the face of the earth. Through his work Boorujy overturns traditional perceptions of animals, imbuing his subjects with totemic status and, through unlikely pairings and unexpected positioning, compels the viewer to pause and reconsider them anew.

The subjects featured in the exhibition include a number of animals whose fate has been largely determined by the human population. Among the works on view will be three drawings of Passenger Pigeons. 2014 marks the 100 year anniversary of the extinction of this bird. Once the most numerous bird on the planet, its demise not only marked man's impact on the planet, but also has the notorious distinction of being the first recording of an extinction in real time. Also on view will be a large-scale image of a horse, caught in a state of ecstasy on the ground. Horses evolved in North America but went extinct on their home continent before being reintroduced by the Spanish. Another species whose fate was dramatically altered by the human hand.

Two images of humans will also be included in the show, a portrait of a woman whose ethnicity is intentionally obscured, and a portrait of Ota Benga, a Mbuti Pygmy man brought to the US for the St. Louis fair in 1904. Benga, born in the Congo and dying by suicide in Virginia, had a tragic yet unprecedented life infamously marked by being displayed for a time at the Bronx Zoo alongside a chimpanzee and orangutan, the implication being that he was less than human. The fact is that we all are, ultimately, animals.

A catalogue will be published with color reproductions and an essay by Debora Kuan in conjunction with the exhibition.

George Boorujy was born in 1973 and raised in New Providence, New Jersey, and lives and works in Brooklyn. He attended the University of Miami intending to study marine biology. However, his art courses soon over-took his science concentration earning him a B.F.A in painting in 1996. After graduation he traveled North America eventually landing back in New York City where he studied at the School of Visual Arts, receiving his M.F.A in 2002. Boorujy has exhibited in the U.S. and abroad.