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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

REAR/VIEW

CURATED BY ERIC C. SHINER

Brian Bress, Melissa Brown, Matthew Chambers, Holly Coulis, Kim Dorland, Andrew Guenther, Simon Hughes, Jeremy Kost, Russell Nachman, David Quadrini and Jesse Finley Reed

November 30, 2007 - January 5, 2008

Reception: Friday, November 30, 6 – 8 pm

Lurking just beneath the gleaming facade of North America's so-called Gilded Age of prosperity lies an underbelly of anxiety and uncertainty, hinting at the true nature of life in the early 21st-century. And although the art world has exploded in terms of commercial sales and record-breaking auction results, artists working within--or in many cases, against--that system have continued to lay the facts bare. We are now living in an age rife with war, jeopardized by constantly fluctuating stock markets, destabilized by an ever-growing mortgage crisis, unaffordable health care, government sanctioned torture and surveillance, widespread poverty and pocked with ever-increasing violence on our urban and rural streets. Simply stated, these are disquieting times, and artists, prone as they are to keep their finger on the pulse of society-at-large, are creating works that forego the brilliance of the art world's wealth, presenting us instead with the gritty and eye-opening reality of the grime that festers below.

The artists included in *REAR/VIEW* look not only at our detritus-strewn landscapes, but also examine the role of the human body in these turbulent times. They seem to look back at an age of innocence, 60's utopian ideals of peace, love and understanding to a time in their lives when life was worth living. A strong sense of consternation is present throughout the works on display, whether it be a painting of a suburban landscape that might represent hell, or a movie starlet applying her make-up in the rearview mirror of a luxury car, before she completely melts down. The juxtaposition of bodies and spaces presented in *REAR/VIEW* will entice the viewer to enter into the fray, to question the status quo and attempt to find a way out of the quandary of contemporary life in North America. The artists in the exhibition, hailing from across Canada and both coasts of the United States, bring to New York a survey of reactions against the new Golden Age, fraught as it is with a pervasive fear that the good times, if they ever existed in the first place, are soon to be a thing of the past.

Los Angeles-based artist **Brian Bress** creates photographs that mimic collage and seem to capture chaos in the confines of a two-dimensional picture plane. His new large-scale work *S.O.S. S.M.S. O.M.G. (for Diana)* includes nine blocks aligned on a quilt-like grid that feature forms and figures struggling for top-billing in a hectic array that attempts to bring order to an otherwise turbulent arrangement. Brooklyn artist **Melissa Brown** creates whimsical landscapes painted on aluminum sheets that, at times, are dream-like visions of Utopia. However, in her work included in *REAR/VIEW*, Brown presents a car crash decorated with Christmas lights and billowing smoke; through the cracked windows of a crumpled SUV, one can see a fantasy island of sorts calling in the background. Here, one must first pass through destruction in order to arrive

at salvation. LA artist **Matthew Chambers** creates installations that include relics from an idealized, and at times, rebellious youth in the form of punk fashion, graffitied furniture, and hand-made weapons, and then hangs drawings referencing everything from cult movies to teenage angst within those environments. Brooklyn-based painter **Holly Coulis** forms haunting canvases of subjects doing apparently nothing in intimate interior and expansive exterior spaces. The vacant looks in the figures' at-times off-set eyes hint at displacement from society, or boredom on an epic scale. Here, a painting of a couple facing away from one another in front of a wide-open window with an abstract whirlwind of a landscape beyond seems to hint that the disconnected couple could be sucked into the vortex of nature at any moment.

Canadian artist **Kim Dorland** paints neon-infused landscapes of suburban banality. His canvases often feature split-level homes, trailer parks, pick-up trucks and the occasional camping scene—sites that are most often taken for granted or even looked down upon across the suburban thresholds of North America. Yet, there is often an explosion of heavy paint spewing forth from the picture plane in the form of a gnarled tree or phantom funnel cloud which seems to terrorize—and indeed jeopardize—the otherwise staid scene depicted. Bursts of neon paint that outline a house or the human figures that sometimes populate the work hint at nuclear radiation or an evil menace lurking in the midst of the middle-class. Painter **Andrew Guenther** creates paintings that are both beautiful and haunting in their often times light color palettes and sexy washes, yet decay often plays a central role in his tenuous canvases. Here, Guenther's new painting *Going Home* features the interior of a car, with actual bead necklaces hung from the painted rearview mirror within. Graffiti on a wall visible through the windshield of the vehicle hints that the car is stuck in a desolate area, and that something is horribly amiss.

Canadian artist **Simon Hughes**, who is currently pursuing an MFA degree in Los Angeles, makes works on paper using watercolor, gouache, collage and stickers that attempt to piece together the disparate histories and realities of his native Canada. Sparkling stickers of Eskimos and women in Korean dress populate modernist buildings set within log forts here, and advertisements riddled with graffiti rule over urban buildings with bonfires burning inside. New York artist **Jeremy Kost**, known for his intimate and gritty pictures of the city's underground nightclub scenes, also takes a hard-biting look at the role of celebrities in our contemporary lives. Here, he includes a video featuring actress Mena Suvari applying her make-up in the rearview mirror of a car parked in the Hollywood Hills. Faint music plays in the background, and as she becomes frustrated by something, she attacks the mirror with her lipstick, wiping away the viewer's gaze. A photograph of famed New York nightlife queen Amanda Lepore also shows her checking her makeup in a compact mirror; beauty remains only partially within grasp.

Russell Nachman paints detritus-ridden landscapes heaping with garbage and mementos seemingly culled from a teenager's lair. His contribution to REAR/VIEW, *Zeit (Fuck It!)*, includes a mound of waste populated by an old speaker, a tire, photographs and magazines with a fence hung with pictures just behind it. The rural landscape beyond, juxtaposed with the floating word "Trope" in the foreground, makes us question the reality of life in our contemporary age. Los Angeles artist and gallerist **David Quadrini** works in a variety of media, all recording life in the epicenter of hip urban life. For REAR/VIEW, Quadrini provides a new work that will unfold in the days just prior to the opening of the exhibition. Finally, photographer and installation artist **Jesse Finley Reed**, who is based in New York City and Berlin, examines the multifaceted aspects of gay life in his work. Reed, who received his MFA from Yale University, provides a photograph that is almost entirely black. As the viewer nears the work, s/he realizes that it is in fact a portrait of a male body, made only slightly visible by a hairline crack of light radiating around the subject's muscled form. Reed seems to posit that the gay male body is still hiding in the shadows of life, yet is trying to break free. Like all of the artists in REAR/VIEW, he focuses on the unspeakable aspects of life in our angst-ridden Golden Age, showing that a lurking menace is ever present.

For more information, please visit the gallery's website or contact Yasha Wallin (Co-Director) at 212.691.7700 or yasha@freightandvolume.com.