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GALLERY

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**For immediate**

**release**

## **Siobhán Hapaska**

*February 23 - March 31, 2002*

Opening Reception: Saturday, February 23, 6 to 9:30pm

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present a new exhibition of work by Siobhán Hapaska. The gallery's second solo show with the London based artist features a range of new work including video, photography and installation. Mixing images, forms and narrative styles, Hapaska's thematic investigations and visual provocations present a coherent exploration of nature and artifice. The hyperreal and the abstract seem to coexist, intensifying each other's relevance, as the cool resolution of these tensions transports the viewer towards more immaterial meditations.

As in earlier work exhibited at venues including the 49<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial and Documenta X, Hapaska presents environments that exploit the tensions and contradictions between the organic and the synthetic. In the main installation,  *Holding*, Hapaska constructs a forest of modified, denuded pine trees ranging in size from 4 to 12 feet in height and set upon simple wooden bases. Their fallen needles serve to fill clear glass ornaments, which dangle, as if resisting gravity, from the very branches from which they fell. The spiny nylon needles from an artificial Christmas tree have been clipped, presenting its steely skeletal structure. The clippings have been arranged in a circular configuration at the base of the tree. Replicating the life cycle of its natural brethren, Hapaska contradictorily releases the synthetic organism from its perpetual, material existence. The trees come to personify the dignity in resisting the natural order dictated by fate, and the desire for something greater that may be achieved in the process. The resulting works become a celebration, not of any final determination, but rather of hope, anticipation and faith. Washing the space with a soundtrack representing a Northern landscape that features a circling reindeer, Hapaska creates an evocative atmosphere that is timeless and emotive.

In the second gallery space, Hapaska's short film 'Mayday' is screened. A wordless and visually seductive narrative, the film details a highly mannered ritual engaged in by a man and woman living in a culture where all emotion and physicality seems to have been supplanted by material and industrial constructs. As in her other work, Hapaska presents herein moving images that exploit the disparity between various forms and textures, abstraction and realism, as found in the living organism. Yet the video format allows for a more literal and multi-layered

*exploration of sophisticated messages involving symbolic exchanges and human interactions as they relate to love and communication, searching, desire and spirituality.*

*Siobhan Hapaska was featured in the Irish pavilion at the 49<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial. Recent group exhibitions include 'ARS 01 - Unfolding Perspectives' MCA, Kiasma, Helsinki; Deutsche Bank Collection of Contemporary Art, Scottish National Gallery of Art, Edinburgh; and 'Landscape' British Council International Touring Exhibition which traveled for two years to major institutions in Europe, South America and Asia. Other recent exhibitions include Sculpture at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthalle with Ernesto Neto and Charles Long; Artifice, Deste Foundation, Athens; Documenta X, Kassel, among others.*