

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## CATHIE BLECK: AQUA REGIA

Toronto, Canada, February 11, 2009 – Meta Gallery is pleased to present *Aqua Regia*, new works by Cathie Bleck. In her first Canadian exhibition, the artist's vision explores the nature of water, the forms it takes and its metaphorical value as the giver of all life. In *Aqua Regia*, literally translated as "Sacred Water", it is appropriate that in the wake of our current environmental malaise, she chose to put water not in the context of a commodity to be bought and sold, nor of a resource for nations to fight over, but rather as the universal source of nourishment for all living things and the subsequent role it plays in the web of life.

Executing her works utilizing the rarely used and very unforgiving medium of Kaolin clay, the 30 years Bleck has spent working with this medium has resulted in a mastery of the technique that could only come with a high degree of devotion and patience. By applying the clay to either board or canvas, the artist then paints the surface, at which point begins the process of carefully carving and scraping away the dark colored clay/paint mixture to reveal the white of the Kaolin beneath. This process of literally peeling away the darkness to reveal the light at its core is a powerful allegorical reference and one whose metaphorical relevance to the content of her work further lends itself to the depth in one of Cathie Bleck's paintings.

As visually captivating as the technique is, the subject matter is worthy of its own quiet respect. On the surface the work is immediately dualistic in nature, white and black, dark and light. Out of the clay arise familiar forms, from large in scale to miniscule, detailing a world where symbiotic relationships are revealed to be the only kind. Where worlds within worlds are perfectly nestled inside feminine forms and the tail of a coelacanth curls with such grace it can't help but become the crest of a wave that trails off into the clouds. This symbiosis so commonly occurring in the artists work invites the viewer to place him or herself within the context of a greater whole, and at the same time realize that we are a single species among many, and we are all connected. A refreshing antithesis to the oblivious nature in which humans interact with our natural environments and one whose timing is noteworthy.

In the end, what Bleck does is makes visible for us what we take for granted moment to moment – the perfect and harmonious balance of the polarities and rhythms of life. For the most part invisible to us due to our fundamentally limited perspective, but made apparent through her work by virtue of the delicate balance of life coming together to create one of her pictures.

In today's climate of general spiritual cynicism, Cathie Bleck's art is a bold nod to the spirit that animates all matter. The prevalence of the spirit emerging through art in today's society, albeit slowly, seems interestingly relevant at a time when the materialistic structures society has built are beginning to show their weakness - perhaps they may not be as strong as we once have thought? Perhaps the system isn't working? Cathie's artworks tells us that *it's ok*. It reminds us in an incredibly loving and nurturing way, as only a mother can, to just be good to each other and the rest will take care of itself.

Cathie Bleck was born in 1956 in Waukegan, Illinois. One of nine children, all of whom are artists, she studied design and painting at the University of Illinois, graduating in Fine Art in 1978. Since then several commissions underline the importance of her artworks including *Business Week*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Time magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Esquire*, *The New York Times*, *Warner Bros*, *Random House*, *Simon & Schuster*, U.S. postage stamps and the 2007 US Earth Day image, among others. She has lectured and conducted workshops internationally and in 2006, *Open Spaces*, the first book of her art was published. She has appeared in close to 50 group exhibitions throughout the world and recently has had two major exhibitions in the US, this past April at the New Britain Museum of American Art and in the fall of 2008 at the Butler Institute of American Art. She lives and works in Cleveland with her husband George Muschler and their children Cari, James and Ana.

*Aqua Regia* will be on view from February 20 to March 29, 2009. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11-6 and Sunday from 12-5. The opening reception will be on Friday February 20 from 7-10pm. Artist in attendance.

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