

Matrushka Construction

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Hours: Mon-Fri 12-7pm
Sat-Sun 11am-6pm

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

Eric Ernest Johnson

Recent Paintings

Dates: February 5—April 4, 2010

Opening Reception: Friday, February 5, 7—9pm

Matrushka Construction is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Los Angeles-based artist **Eric Ernest Johnson** whose paintings of real and imaginary places—cities, villages, and rural areas—convey poignant emotional memories of the now cluttered natural world.

The exhibition will consist of several paintings that reference familiar locations and made-up sites. To create his extraordinary settings, Johnson reduces the primary cultural subject in each painting to a sparse delineation, while placing an emphasis on natural things. This gesture signals the collective social and political vulnerabilities we face in daily life, as it points to our associations, now romanticized and lost, with nature.

Johnson's paintings show a sweetened side of colonization and oppression in a firmly naïve style. He often renders society's designated losers (who might appear weak or even comical to those assuming dominance) in a way that exposes traditional ideas about the weak-versus-strong to be inventions born of human fear—fear that can be traced to the supremacy of the natural world. Johnson's paintings illuminate the slippage between the desire to control humankind and earth through built environments, and the unimagined resultant fates that confront and confine the colonizer.

The paintings also simplify situations and scenery where the vastness of nature is often jam-packed with civilization's artifacts. Johnson's unusual social environments engage our natural instincts, as they function within a new form of spatial wisdom that offers hope for survival and continuation.

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