

## UPCOMING SHOW

*Up to 20 works on show*  
Feb. 25 – Mar. 24, 2007  
Billy Shire Fine Arts  
5790 Washington Blvd  
Culver City, CA 90232  
(323) 297-0600

● SHOW LOCATION CULVER CITY, CA

## MARC DENNIS

## Alternate Worlds

Marc Dennis has long been fascinated by the world within the world, the small inconsequential bits and pieces of the natural world like flowers, fauna, tiny animals and insects that we might see but never really study closely. Dennis, though, uses his brushes like a microscope and transforms all of the subtle designs, shapes and colors of these amazing objects into richly detailed painterly concerns.

"I've always been fascinated by the freaky forms and colors I had discovered and would spend hours and hours reading, writing and drawing what it was I had seen," says Dennis. "Later in life I had to decide on whether to become a full-time artist or naturalist. Well, it was only natural that I would combine my two passions – and I've been painting images of the natural world ever since."

In this new series of paintings on exhibit for the first time on the West Coast, Dennis has set his sights on the beautiful details of the infinite world of insects – the designs of a wasp's wings, the small claws at the end of their legs, the color patterns near their stingers – as well as some otherworldly looking plant and flower arrangements.

"This quality of the object gives me an opportunity to tap into my own imagination and be able to sustain it while at the same time maintaining a sense of reality as well," says Dennis. "And that is what is really intriguing to me. I can step into my studio and enter an alternate world, a path of my own making, and that's what makes this fun."

Dennis' work in this area is inspired by 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrations and etchings of the natural world that were usually based on someone else's description of the object, thus turning the image into part reality and part fantasy. This combination of the real and surreal always has fascinated Dennis and it is the same sense of mystery that he is after in these works as well.

"It's like Durer's famous drawing of a rhinoceros where he showed this amazing creature that is based on what he thought is real, but is mainly from his own imagination," says Dennis. "That wonder and beauty in the natural world is what I'm after and what I'm trying to create. It's a combination of what we come to know and expect combined with a bit of artistic license and wonder."

Dennis is also guided by a quote he discovered from Aristotle in which the philosopher states, "Art completes what Nature cannot bring to finish. The artist

VESPID MORTEM DEAD WASPS #2, OIL ON CANVAS, 12 X 12"



gives us knowledge of nature's unrealized ends." For Dennis, this combination of the natural and imagined world is at the root of these new paintings.

"I want these paintings to remind people of a way of looking at the world," says Dennis. "To embrace the beauty and weirdness of life and to also be open to be seduced by the image itself and to appreciate them for their diversity and tweaked and twisted possibilities of the natural world."

This idea of nature is something that Dennis has held since a child.

These paintings suggest the curiosity and fascination of a child exploring the forest. Beauty, for Dennis, isn't just found in the overall look of a flower but in the details, like a row of ants crawling down the shaft of that same flower.

"Everyday as a child I was out in the woods, picking up branches, kicking stones and rocks and finding out what's underneath and just trying to break that external layer of sight can't get to," says Dennis. "I'm fascinated by what's underneath, and those are the things that I want to paint."