

**Tanya Marcuse and Christopher Russell**

July 31 - September 21

**Opening reception:** Thursday, July 31, 6-9 pm

**Artist Lecture with Tanya Marcuse:** Saturday, August 2, 11:30am

**Independent Art Projects**

1315 MASS MoCA Way  
North Adams, MA

Julie Saul Gallery announces a two month exhibition of gallery artists **Tanya Marcuse** and **Christopher Russell** as part of the new art space **Independent Art Projects**. Marcuse and Russell have each used the still life to interpret duality in nature. Either as a photograph or in sculpture, each work evokes a romantic and tragic sensibility, with a contemporary edge. Russell's terra cotta sculptures are classical still lives in the round, teeming with the energy of the birds and bees. The Darwinist theme is unmistakable as he presents clear interactions among creation, scavenging and hunting, most clear in *Tooth and Claw*, 2014. A banquet centerpiece overflows with grapes, strawberries and flowers, attracting rats who eat the fruits. A large hawk, rendered in intense detail, has swooped down to hunt the rats.

Russell, *Tooth and Claw*, 2014, glazed white terracotta, 33 x 20 x 16"



Russell says "My process is very traditional, very much inspired by the artisans whose work I look at. The work is labor intensive—I make my own glazes and do my own firing. I often imagine all the people before me who sat at workbenches like I do, and figured out how to make the beautiful, at times unbelievable, things that I have learned so much from. I think of my work as both carrying on their tradition and as casting a light on it."

As a counterpoint to the ceramic sculpture, photographer Tanya Marcuse tackles her interpretation of the life cycle through arranged still lives captured in nature. Rendered in rich color, her tapestry-like images depict seemingly found views of the forest floor that she constructs over days and weeks using rotting fruits and leaves, along with various blossoms and insects, weaving still lives in a natural environment. Marcuse creates lavish tableaux perched between the plausible and implausible and between the painterly and the photographic. They evoke beauty and sensuality as well as the duality of life and death. Made between 2010 and 2013, the series was shot with a 4" x 5" view camera using film and printed digitally by the artist.

Marcuse says of this new work: "I picture the garden: unruly, wild: lush with rot and overabundance. The uneaten fruit of the tree lies on the ground and floats down streams. Hieronymus Bosch has been my primary inspiration for this project. His medieval way of describing may seem an unlikely guide for a photographer in 2013, yet I am riveted by the spatial and conceptual tension in his paintings between fragment and whole, weight and weightlessness, paradise and hell."

*Fallen* evolved from Marcuse's series called *Fruitless*, which records the apple trees in the orchards around her Hudson Valley home through the cycle of the seasons. *Fruitless* was shot with a 4" x 5" camera and executed as small platinum prints, as was most of her previous work, including *Undergarments and Armour*, shown in the ICP Triennial 2010. Marcuse earned her MFA from Yale. She has been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship among other honors, and her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the Yale Art Gallery. She has published three books with Nazraeli Press, *Undergarments and Armour* (2005), *Fruitless* (2007) and *Wax Bodies* (2012).



Marcuse, *Fallen* N° 129, 2011, pigment print, 37 ¾ x 48" image, 44 x 54" sheet, ed. 7