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HOWARD FONDA *"SQUONK'S TEARS"* JANUARY 7–FEBRUARY 6, 2010

OPENING: Thursday, January 7, 2010

Mixed Greens is pleased to announce Howard Fonda's fourth solo show with the gallery. In *Squonk's Tears,* he will debut new paintings and drawings.

The legend of the Squonk began long ago in the rich Hemlock forests of Pennsylvania. A mythical beast covered with warts and blemishes, the Squonk is judged by mankind to be grotesque despite its innate desire for acceptance. Misunderstood, it spends its days hiding and weeping, trapped in its ill-fitting skin. For as long as the legend has existed, the Squonk has been able to evade capture by dissolving into a pool of tears.

The insightful metaphor and romantic anthropomorphism of the Squonk's tale are extremely poignant today. The creature's dilemma functions, as many monster tales do, as a symbol of vulnerability and crisis. Adopting the perspective of the Squonk provides us with an opportunity to experience empathy and hope.

It is this type of introspection—a sincere search for truth and beauty—that Fonda explores in this latest body of work. In contrast to his last show, these paintings are looser and rhythmic; undulating and cascading. Brightly abstract, and containing hundreds of thoughtful, well-placed scribbles and marks, Fonda's work inspires contemplation of nature, order, and the fine line between existence and nonexistence. Until a work is "finished," Fonda paints and repaints each canvas until the piece survives as a palimpsest, foregrounding an "ill-fitting" skin and containing all the marks that were made before. In an Artforum review from April 2009, Michelle Grabner describes Fonda's work as being successful because "the artist privileg[es] intuition over illustration and convey[s] transcendental philosophy without strictly picturing a divinely invested natural world."

Howard Fonda received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2001). His first solo show, "…with love," was at Mixed Greens, New York City (2004). In 2008 alone, he had solo exhibitions at Light & Sie Gallery in Dallas, TX; Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago, IL; Harwood Art Center in Albuquerque, NM; and Mixed Greens Gallery in New York City. In 2009, his solo exhibition at Roots and Culture in Chicago received a review in Artforum. Other exhibition venues include Duchess, Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Raid Projects, Los Angeles; Bodybuilder and Sportsman, Chicago; ebersmoore, Chicago; and Barbara Davis Gallery, Houston, TX. Before moving to Scottsdale, Arizona, Howard was an instructor in the Painting and Drawing Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

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