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For Immediate Release:

THE GROUNDHOGS: *HINTERLANDS*

Opening reception: Thursday, September 13, 5 – 8 p.m.  
Exhibition dates: September 6 – October 6, 2018

Gallery Jones is pleased to announce *Hinterlands*, a special exhibition of work by The Groundhogs collective. In 2007, Anne Ashton, Randall Finnerty, Paul Morstad and Craig Welch came together as artists to exhibit under the moniker The Groundhogs. Eleven years later, they reunite for an exhibition that grows ever more relevant as time passes—an examination of the natural realm as it falls under the influence of human encroachment.



Randall Finnerty, *Bear on a Buoy*, mixed media on paper, 22 x 22 inches.

Canada has a unique wilderness that rolls on and on out of sight, a seemingly endless terrain that appears largely unblemished by human development. A connection to the vastness of our landscape has imprinted itself deeply in the Canadian sensibility, though it transforms even as we admire it. The artists in *Hinterlands* address this complex relationship—the push and pull between the natural world and the ever-expanding human developments upon it—individually and in concert. The works in the exhibition playfully and solemnly point out the overlooked fringes of society, the hinterlands, where an underlying struggle for existence and survival is taking place.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Originally from California, **Anne Ashton** has been a contributing member of the artistic community in Montréal for over thirty years. Her work, which takes the form of painting, drawing and installation, has a unique visual style that exposes the vulnerable yet powerful beauty in nature. In Ashton's works for *Hinterlands*, small collections of delicate objects (such as shells, bones, eggs) hang against a soft backdrop of blue sky and white clouds. Each gathering of disparate items, sometimes forming new objects or animals, points to the real interdependence within natural systems.

**Randall Finnerty's** ocular windows present strange and imaginative situations involving animals and human structures. In some of his mixed-media works, animals distinct to the Canadian landscape (owls, bears, wolves, and moose) appear alone and romanticized, revoking a formerly untouched wilderness. But in others these individuals are placed in direct contact with man-made structures and objects, provoking critical thought around the often-disjointed co-existence of animals and humans. Originally from Ontario, Randall Finnerty has lived and worked as an artist in Montréal since 1992.

**Craig Welch**'s visual world is largely defined by shadow and light. Mountain peaks, animals, and human bones exist in isolation. Figures appear blurred or subdued, as if fixed in the past, and around them the natural world seems vacant yet austere. Originally from Ontario, Welch studied design and animation in Detroit, Michigan and worked for many years at the National Film Board in Toronto. His films, which touch on the surreal, have won numerous prizes at festivals around the world. Since 2006 he has directed his efforts towards oil painting, exhibiting in galleries in the Montréal area.

**Paul Morstad**'s recognizable and detailed watercolour paintings are often filled with characters and objects of interest. Historical and literary figures, sea life, birds and musical instruments populate his meticulously crafted works, muted as if each one is a collector's item or relic. Morstad's selected works for *Hinterlands* present subtle yet poignant images in which the thread of existence connecting humans and animals becomes tangled up or complicated by roles of dominance. Paul Morstad lives and works in Vancouver, BC and has been represented by Gallery Jones since 2014.