

Mark Moore Gallery  
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Tues – Sat, 11am – 6pm

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## **Thomas Woodruff** ***The Legends of the Mysterious Rocks***

Opening Reception: January 11, 6-8pm  
On View January 11 – February 15, 2014



Mark Moore Gallery is proud to present "The Legends of the Mysterious Rocks," an exhibition of paintings and drawings by New York artist, Thomas Woodruff. Marking the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery, it will showcase Woodruff's visionary tableau narratives. The paintings, all enigmatic rocky landscapes, explore the places of miracles and mysteries. Each mythical composition is characterized by equal parts scientific precision and playful storytelling.

Woodruff's latest cycle derives from a single chapter in a larger body of work, a graphic opera entitled "Francis Rothbart," which follows a fastidious feral child who is raised by magpies and other creatures and is repeatedly struck by lightning. As a consequence of the phenomena, the child develops eccentric talents, which he then abuses - leading to his ultimate destruction by the same natural world that once nurtured him. This picaresque saga unfolds in an allegorical environment, much like the topographical constructions behind renaissance religious paintings. Referencing both the Venetian landscapes of Bellini, Pierro di Cosimo and Carpaccio, mixed with the unlikely animated backdrops of Jay Ward and Chuck Jones, Woodruff's images bring to mind the fictive gardens of a paradise lost that lingers somewhere deep in all our souls, moist and dark like the caves of the pious saints. Each scene transports us to a place in which trees anthropomorphize into figures bending from the weight of stalactite crowns, an iris becomes the gown for an oneiric sprite, and the sky rains down tears, as if mimicking the melancholy of a weeping willow. In a similarly muted palette, his drawings bring us ever closer to this mythical ecology by focusing specifically on ethereal, fragile blossoms. Petals, roots, and leaves are rendered by the delicate hand of an illustrative botanist with a penchant for the poignant. Woodruff's images are multi-sourced amalgamations that echo with familiarity, portraying a world that is not only our own but also exists in the place of our half remembered dreams.

Thomas Woodruff received a BFA from Cooper Union (NY), and attended the Skowhegan School (MA). His works have been included in numerous exhibitions nationally and internationally including the Whitney Museum of Art (NY), The Norman Rockwell Museum (MA), the Kohler Arts Center (WI), and the National Gallery of Australia. His work is in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum (NY), MIT List Center (MA), The New School (NY), the Honolulu Museum of Art (HI), the New Orleans Museum of Art (LA), the Greenville County Museum (SC), and the Art Gallery of Western Australia.