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# INKA ESSENHIGH

19 APRIL – 25 MAY 2018

**NEW YORK, NEW YORK – MILES McENERY GALLERY** is pleased to announce its first exhibition of recent paintings by Inka Essenhigh. The exhibition will open 19 April and will remain on view through 25 May 2018. A public reception will be held for the artist on Thursday 19 April from 6 to 8pm. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with essays by Phoebe Hoban and Rob Colvin.

Inka Essenhigh's illusionary works are suspended somewhere between dreams and reality. The subjects swirl, slither, and ooze through space, creating mythically ambiguous and at times cartoonish figures that evoke a joyous mood of childlike fantasy. These animated characters inhabit strange, uncanny places—glimmering with an otherworldly sheen on the sleek surfaces of Essenhigh's canvases.

Essenhigh began her investigation of imaginative work in the early 1990s and continues this exploration in her new series. After gaining notoriety for her use of enamel, a high-gloss paint often applied to house exteriors, she shifted her focus to oil in 2001, in order to experiment with a more traditional artistic method. Over fifteen years later, she has returned to her original medium, which recalls the rhythmic chaos of Jackson Pollock's drip paintings: the long, liquid lines and figurative blobs evolving into anthropomorphic trees, flowers or people.



All aspects of Essenhigh's works are alive and conscious in their own world, personifying substances such as light and nature to interact with figures in space. In creating these dynamic works, the artist begins from a place seen or felt in her mind. She allows the feeling to guide her, following perceived lines of energy to shape her contorted figures. Every now and then a familiar detail peeks through, such as a compact mirror, flying pigeon, or rosebud, grounding these whimsical visions in the reality from which they sprang.

Essenhigh invites viewers to join in the pieces' playful celebration, stating, "My paintings are absolutely meant to give pleasure. They are meant for beauty. They are meant for your delight...because I believe that if you make delightful, beautiful things, that in fact you make the world a more delightful and beautiful place."

**INKA ESSENHIGH** (b. 1969 in Bellefonte, PA) received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1992 from Columbus College of Art & Design in Columbus, OH, and her Master of Fine Arts degree in 1994 from School of Visual Arts in New York, NY.

Recent solo exhibitions include "Inka Essenhigh: A Fine Line," Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, VA; "Between Worlds," Frist Center, Nashville, TN; "Stars and Flowers," Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, CO; "Comet Dust & Crystal Shards," Jacob Lewis Gallery, New York, NY; Columbus College of Art & Design, Canzani Center, Columbus, OH; Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; and Pace Prints, New York, NY.

Recent group exhibitions include "Parallel Lines," Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago, IL (upcoming); "Le Nuove Frontiere Della Pittura," Fondazione Stelline, Milan, Italy; "Belief in Giants," Miles McEnergy Gallery, New York, NY; "Dead Among The Dead!," Ellis King, Dublin, Ireland; "Imagine," Brand New Gallery, Milan, Italy; "Introductions," La MaMa La Galleria, New York, NY; "Eden, éden,"

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Galerie Torri, Paris, France, curated by Timothée Chaillou; "The Ukrainian Diaspora: Women Artists 1908-2015," The Ukrainian Museum, New York, NY; "Painters NYC," Páramo Galeria, Guadalajara, Mexico, traveled to Museo de los Pintores Oaxaqueños (MUPO), Oaxaca, Mexico; "Disturbing Innocence," The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY; "Sargent's Daughters," Sargent's Daughters, New York, NY; "The Golden Ass," Blindarte Contemporanea, Naples, Italy; "Cinematic Visions: Painting at the Edge of Reality," Victoria Miro, London, England; "Pivot Points: 15 Years & Counting," Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, North Miami, FL; "Fairy Tales, Monsters and the Genetic Imagination," Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, TN, traveled to Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Canada; Glenbow Art Museum, Calgary, Canada; and "The Sound of Painting," Palazzo Saluzzo Paesana, Turin, Italy.

Her work is included in the permanent collections of Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, North Miami, FL; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; Tate Modern, London, England; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

Essenhigh lives and works in New York, NY.

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Miles McEnergy Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and by appointment.

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Image: *Birdsongs*, 2017, Enamel on canvas, 42 x 40 inches, 106.7 x 101.6 cm