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Contact: Marta Hewett or David Smith
513.281.2780

marta@martahewett.com
davidsmith@martahewett.com

Marta Hewett Gallery Presents: **Kevin Veara - *The Birds of Paradise***

On View: February 3rd through March 25th, 2017

Opening Reception: Friday, February 3rd, 6-8pm



CINCINNATI, OH - Marta Hewett Gallery is pleased to announce *The Birds of Paradise* a solo exhibition of recent paintings by Kevin Veara. The exhibition will be on view from February 3rd through March 25th, 2017. The gallery will host a reception for the artist on February 3rd from 6-8 pm. This event is free and open to the public.

The exhibition will feature a selection of recent paintings by artist Kevin Veara from his *Exult* and *Americana* series. The focus of these brilliantly colored acrylic paintings are the birds and plants of the Sangamon River Valley, near Springfield, IL. The array of avian life range from the common to uncommon, and include endangered or extinct species. Staying true to their anatomy and plumage

the various species are rendered in a style unique to Veara's practice. The meticulously painted compositions depict the birds encircled by swirling foliage and fauna. These bright and complex environments refer to specific habitats and correlate with the bird's species. By illustrating this relationship, the artist reinforces environmental issues and concerns. The subjects become metaphors for the human complexity in climate change, invasive species and genetic modification.

A native of Springfield IL, Veara's studio is surrounded by forest designated as a nature preserve that is home to a myriad species of birds who frequent the feeders outside his windows. Here on the steep forested banks and flood plains of the Sangamon River the artist finds his inspiration. His observations are in tune with the natural time – a calendar based of the arrival and departure of the birds. Species such as the Juncos arrive in the fall from the arctic and migrate north in the spring. The Sangamon Valley is as far south as the Junco travels and uses this area to breed. In addition, this location gives Veara a heightened awareness for his surroundings and the birds become barometers for the quality or deterioration of the environment. The Whip-poor-will for example, that once flourished in the Sangamon Valley is now absent due to loss of habitat from invasive Bush Honeysuckle. Veara's profession as a tattoo artist for the past 20 years further informs his process. His paintings begin with drawings on tracing paper which are then transferred to a gesso prepared wood panel. The influence of tattoo design is evident in the vivid colors and exotic forms that carry through the paintings.

1310 Pendleton St. – Cincinnati, OH 45202
513 281-2780 – marta@martahewett.com
www.martahewett.com

Biography

Kevin Veara received his MFA from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale in 1991. Since 1992 he has been the owner of Black Moon Tattoos in Springfield IL. Veara has exhibited at the Illinois State Museum, University of Illinois Springfield, and Southern Illinois University. Gallery exhibitions include Marta Hewett Gallery (Cincinnati), PackerSchopf Gallery (Chicago), Strawn Gallery (Jacksonville), and Focus 4 (Chicago). Veara's paintings are in the permanent collections of the Illinois Audubon Society, the Illinois State Museum, and Southern Illinois University Carbondale. This is the artist's third show at the Marta Hewett Gallery and his first solo exhibition in Cincinnati.

About Marta Hewett Gallery

Marta Hewett Gallery is located at 1310 Pendleton Street at the Pendleton Arts Center Annex in Over-the-Rhine, downtown Cincinnati. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 am - 5pm and Saturday, 11am - 3pm. Admission and parking are free. For more information please call the gallery at 513.281.2780 or visit: www.martahewett.com.



*Images: (top) Exult #3 (2016) American Robin with Fanciful Bluebell - 30in x 30in, Acrylic on wood.
(bottom) Americana #14 (2014) Passenger Pigeon - 50in x 20in, Acrylic on wood. Courtesy of the Artist and Marta Hewett Gallery*

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