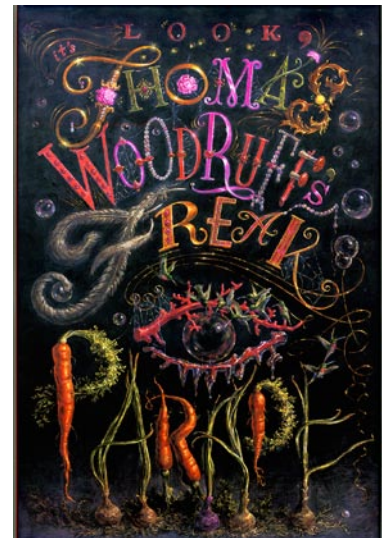


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **THOMAS WOODRUFF'S FREAK PARADE OPENS AT UAM SEPTEMBER 6**

Long Beach, CA — (August 1, 2007) — The University Art Museum is pleased to present *Thomas Woodruff's FREAK PARADE*, September 6 – October 14, 2007. Thomas Woodruff constructs a bold statement with his latest body of work, *FREAK PARADE*. Five years in the making, Woodruff dedicates the 34 mixed-media pieces on paper to “all those irregulars in shape or spirit.” Disturbed by the specter of homogeneity in contemporary culture, the artist celebrates the curious, the bizarre, and the eccentric. A master of technique, Woodruff combines the genres of landscape, portraiture, allegory, still life, and illustration with iconographic elements from posters, theatrical sets, advertising, tattoos, heraldry, carnival banners, and antiquarian books to create 32 unforgettable characters. Woodruff's *FREAK PARADE* participants Miss Giggles, Anatomy Boy, and Poor Mr. P (among others), join the fantastic pantheon of characters created by artists such as Bosch, Bruegel, and Ensor. At once thought-provoking, marvelous, and terrifying, *FREAK PARADE* is a carnevalesque tour-de-force not to be missed. Woodruff will make a personal appearance at the UAM on September 6th; a gallery talk is planned for 5 pm, followed by a reception and book signing from 6-8 pm. Copies of Mr. Woodruff's latest publication, *Thomas Woodruff's FREAK PARADE*, (2006, Hardy Marks Publications) will be available at the museum.



Descriptions of Thomas Woodruff often mention the artist's penchant for tattoos – he had worked as a tattooist in the 1980s – and that is cited to have influenced much of his work. Discussions of his work also focus upon Woodruff's iconography and technique; he has been labeled “Neo-Victorian,” “Edwardian”, and a “Neo-Fabulist.” The New York Times art critic William Zimmer wrote, “Woodruff takes his primary cue from illustrators of the Edwardian era... animals wear clothes, and the action takes place in a lustrous atmosphere... the painting is both disturbing and sweet” (The New York Times, Jan. 25, 1998). Combining his flair for lush colors and detailed observation, topics that are normally considered to be taboo, are made palpable, the ‘freak’ becoming triumphant.

Image: Book cover *Thomas Woodruff's Freak Parade*, Hardy Marks Publications, 2006

-more-

Thomas Woodruff was born in 1957 in New Rochelle, New York, into an Irish-American Roman Catholic family of six children. He earned his B.F.A. from Cooper Union in 1979. He currently serves as the chair of the Illustration and Cartooning Department in the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program at the School of Visual Arts in New York. He received the Willard Cummings Memorial Prize, from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. His works have been featured in numerous publications including *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, *American Illustration*, *European Illustration*, *New Drawing in America*, *Tattootime*, *The Village Voice*, *Interview*, *Psychology Today*, *The New Yorker*, *Juxtapoz*, and *Harper's Magazine*. Woodruff also has created book jackets for various authors, such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Anne Tyler. He has exhibited his artwork extensively in the United States as well as internationally, including Australia and the Netherlands.



The UAM is extremely grateful to the William Gillespie Foundation, Instructionally Related Activities Fund, the Constance W. Glenn Fund for Exhibition and Education Programs, CSULB College of the Arts, the Bess Hodges Foundation, the Arts Council for Long Beach, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their continued programming support.

Also on view in the Project Room:

**Stephen Berkman: Quadrascope**

September 6 - October 14, 2007

Through his glass plate ambrotypes and installations, it appears that photographer Stephen Berkman has traveled back in time to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A clever illusionist, Berkman uses the wet collodian process, popular from the 1850s to the 1880s to stage images, which while rooted in the past, also refer to the conceits of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Using four lenses, light, a moth, and screens Berkman illustrates how an image is refracted or captured through a camera. The result is a magical, lyrical display that would have delighted viewers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as it delights audiences today.

**CALANDER OF EVENTS**

September 6	5 PM 6-8 PM	Gallery talk with Thomas Woodruff Public reception + book signing
September 11	12 PM	UAM@noon, Gallery talk with Stephen Berkman

Image: *Thomas Woodruff's Man of Lettuce*, detail, 2000-05, mixed media on rag paper with rhinestones, 40 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.