

## PRESS RELEASE

**SECULAR / SACRED****Artists: Gina Gilmour and Ellen Wiener**

*Secular to Sacred* will be on view at Art Sites, 651 West Main Street (Route 25), Riverhead from March 17, 2007 through April 22, 2007. A reception for the artists will be held Saturday, March 17 from 5 to 7 PM. For more information and additional hours call 631 591 2401.

*Secular to Sacred* shows how two very different artists visually evoke the sacred, even within a secular context. Gina Gilmour catches that moment of epiphany in the simple act of swimming, along with nuances of meaning and mood in a series of charcoal drawings. Ellen Wiener combines scholarship with contemporary content. Inspired by Medieval Books of Hours, her works offer immediate visual pleasure, instructional explorations through symbolism and direct references to science, history and religion.

*Gina Gilmour*

Observant of the world around her, Gilmour captures seemingly inconsequential moments and imbues them with almost mythic proportions. A stark form dives into a pool; a recumbent body occupies the horizon between water and land. The viewer's empathetic reactions range from memories of that delicious oblivion when diving into cool water to the loneliness of facing an unknown immensity.

In her own word, Gilmour states, "Art has always been for me a means of processing experience, a way to celebrate and to mourn, to rail against the intolerable, and to navigate the mysterious." Ronny Cohen in a review published in *Artforum*, wrote, "... the style of representation she has developed has allowed her to treat the most elemental themes of life with refreshing conviction, and not the usual dose of pretentious bombast."

Gina Gilmour has roots in both the South and the North, having grown up in North Carolina and now residing in her Mattituck studio. Her work has been shown at galleries and museums such as the National Women's Museum in Washington, the Mint Museum in Charlotte, and the Queens Museum. Her work resides in collections ranging from the Newark Museum, and the North Carolina Museum of Art to a number of University and corporate collections.

*Ellen Wiener*

The medieval Books of Hours that inspired Wiener's works were private possessions frequently owned by women for use at home, never in church. Organized by the monastic divisions of time, each of the 8 prescribed *hours* has a specific relationship to meditations within the course of a single day as well as representing steps in a larger cycle of spiritual growth developing over a lifetime.

Wiener's oil panels and paintings on paper, celebrate and distill conventional medieval allegory in the tradition of page-sized miniatures. Through her exploration of medieval cosmologies, Wiener finds, even in the tenets of empirical science, surprising parallels with current secular and contemplative philosophies, reflecting the human need to integrate the unseen with the closely observed.

Originally, the pictorial contents of Books of Hours used agrarian events, astrology and astronomy, costume, calendars and customs to reflect their purpose as almanacs for right living. In Wiener's paintings for a new Book of Hours, she combines imagery from her own life; subway maps, cameras, telescopes and satellites, visual quotes from contemporary science, familiar objects like dishtowels and shovels-with

references to sources from the 9th to the 15th centuries. The paintings inspire a slow and personal reading by the viewer, one that can be renewed time and again.

Ellen Wiener is a painter and printmaker, working on the North Fork of Long Island. She holds degrees from Bennington College and Queens College CUNY, and has taught and lectured widely at the university level since 1985, including the International Medieval Congress, The Maryland Art Institute, the Heckscher Museum among others.

Because of her interest in books and book history, illuminations, theology and art history she has studied in non-degree programs at; Rhode Island School of Design, Princeton University, Stony Brook SUNY, The New School for Social Research in conjunction with The Morgan Library, SUNY Purchase, The Fine Arts Work Center, and The 92<sup>nd</sup> St Y in Manhattan.

Faculty positions include appointments at Princeton University, Stony Brook SUNY, Louisiana State University, Saint Mary's Honors College of Maryland, Sweet Briar College, Suffolk Community College, University of New Mexico, Queens College CUNY and Dartmouth College.