

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Laura Ball: *Keep*

October 16 – November 14, 2015

Opening Reception: Friday, October 16, 7-9 pm

Free and open to the public / Artist in Attendance

David B. Smith Gallery is pleased to announce Laura Ball's second solo exhibition at the gallery, *Keep*. With the works featured in the exhibition, the artist continues her exploration of the subconscious and the hero myth of Joseph Campbell, a theme she has addressed in previous bodies of work. In *Keep*, Ball focuses more specifically on world myth and the beasts associated with these myths – largely guardians. In this exhibition, Ball creates a sanctuary within the collective unconscious - where myth thrives - for endangered animals whose presence in the world is rapidly declining. With these mythic portraits, Ball strives to eternalize the extinct, to create a land in which these creatures can exist forever.

The creatures – comprised of writhing bodies of animals, bones, antlers – represent the animal urges that we suppress. The title, *Keep*, references the artist's desire to create a safe space for these creatures. To hold one's possessions, to hold in a given place, to maintain, to cause to stay in a particular place – the myriad of definitions for "keep" allude to the artist's attempts to provide a place of refuge for these creatures in her watercolors.

Artworks in the show focus on creatures that are protective in nature – including the griffin, which guards precious objects and the Hydra which guards an entrance to the underworld. Ball also delves into myths beyond the Western realm - "Weeping Willow (Tree of Life)" and "Love Story" both allude to the Simurgh, a Persian mythical creature and "Ganesh" is representative of the Hindu deity. The diptych, "Crossing Over (Angalifu and Nola)," highlights Ball's interest in the preservation of animals on the edge of extinction, whose appearance seems derived from a mythic mold. This artwork is modeled on actual Northern White Rhinos - Angalifu and Nola, who both lived at the San Diego Wild Animal Park where Angalifu recently died. With this depiction, the artist elevates these real animals to a mythical stature – as they are almost extinct, the need to keep these animals and embody them in the eternal is ever more necessary. That the creatures depicted are comprised of a whirlwind of various non-mythic animals, suggests that myths – the stories we create as humans – are always built upon the real.



Rebirth, 2015, watercolor and graphite, 51 x 50 in (129.54 x 127 cm)

About Laura Ball

Laura Ball's work combines her technical achievements in watercolor with an ongoing part-psychoanalytical, part-environmental project she has explored over the last ten years. A recipient of numerous awards and grants, Ball has exhibited in galleries across the United States and internationally. Her work is in important private and public collections, including recent additions to the Denver Art Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Ball received her MFA in 2004 from the University of California, Berkeley. Ball lives and works in San Diego, California.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Art in America* and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.