

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Endangered Planet Gallery — (949) 497-5690

384 Forest Ave., Gallery 13, Laguna Beach, CA 92651



“Canary in a Gold Mind”

**Endangered Planet Gallery Exhibits the Whimsical yet Haunting
Sculptures by CHERYL LOMMATSCH**

Laguna Beach, Calif., June 10, 2009 — Opening Saturday June 27, “Canary in a Gold Mind” is a display of 16 works that includes paintings and sculpture from Southern California artist Cheryl Lommatsch. Sculptural assemblages featuring found, forged and stressed metals, along with salvaged remnants of wood, shell and various fibers, the forms take on a sense of animism – each piece appearing to have an active spirit. Lommatsch’s pieces poignantly embody the plight of birds. The artist’s unique, mixed media sculptures demonstrate dynamic movement and organic forms and are also ideal for both interior and exterior installations.

Gallery owner Charles Michael Murray twisted the familiar reference of “Canary in a Coal Mine” to create a title that would make viewers more mindful of “listening to their own ‘mental canaries,’ and awakening to the reality that thirst for monetary wealth can be a source of conflict, environmental destruction, war and potentially our demise.”

Though many of the works are stylized and whimsical, they evoke a sense of the wildlife struggling in their natural habitat. Lommatsch notes, “Many of my bird-like creatures have become victims of ‘entrapment’ within metal and wooden sculptural forms. A predicament of ‘boundaries’ and challenges is presented in these pieces. I am asking those who view my work to contemplate what is happening to our planet, to our environment, to our creatures... to us. My concerns lie in the struggle between Man and Nature. And, due to man’s carelessness and greed – freedom and prison have become ambiguous terms.”

The artist’s forms also reference the technological advancements of hybridization and the concept of “cyber-creatures” where the boundaries between what is human or “natural” and what is machine are blurred. The piece *What Fools and Pathetic Heroes are We* presents a heroically wounded anthropomorphic bird-creature who has succumbed to hybridization. His legs are now metal prosthetic appendages and his wings, once tools of destruction (traps and bullets), have become constructive ‘tools’ that now allow him to exist in a liminal state, awaiting other modifications necessary for his survival. This creature has mutated to become an evolutionary hybrid. He has transcended his innate innocence and true nature to become what he must in order to survive a world that is environmentally corrupted. *Pathetic Hero* has chosen adaptation and reemergence over extinction.

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Lommatsch's striking sculpture piece *The Goddess of a Thousand Souls* (2007, vintage tractor grill, wood, sticks, reeds, waxed linen, keys) is the artist's own *Winged Victory*. Her wings spread to a span of 108 inches, holding her position as the largest piece in the gallery. Her essence and physical vocabulary originated from a pot-metal grill from a 1940's farm tractor. According to Lommatsch, "This piece deviated from the materials I have used up to this point: her torso, worked around the grill, is formed of wood, sticks and woven reeds. I chose to leave her without a tangible or distinct face because I wanted hers to be that of all who are sympathetic, caring and nurturing."

A reception for the artist will be held on Saturday, June 27 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. and will include appetizers and refreshments. Entertainment will be provided by singer/songwriter Tiana Star. After graduating from the prestigious Berklee College of Music – where she won its Songwriting Achievement Award – Tiana's soulful folk/rock songs have been featured on XM radio, and local CA radio. Her voice has been described as a cross between the power-pop abilities of Kelly Clarkson and the delicate control of Natalie Merchant.

Lommatsch currently teaches in the art department at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo. She holds an M.F.A. from California State University at Long Beach and, for the past 30 years has been featured in solo as well as group exhibitions in the Mingei International Museum, San Diego; the Society of North American Goldsmiths Conference; Metal Arts Society of Southern California, Tustin; and Angels Gate Gallery, San Pedro, among others. She has received five awards from the Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles. Her work is featured in a number of private collections including those of IBM and Jenny Craig Corporation.

Lommatsch worked as Artistic Production Consultant to Arnold Schwartzman on the film *Genocide* – winner of the Academy Award for Best Film Documentary. She is the former Teacher/Owner of Emerging Artists Youth Art Program in Los Alamitos. The Endangered Planet Gallery is at 384 Forest Avenue, Laguna Beach, CA, 92651. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. The exhibit, which runs August 25, 2009 will be a highlight during the July ArtWalk on July 2 from 6:00 -8:30 p.m. For further details, membership or volunteer opportunities please visit www.EndangeredPlanet.org or telephone (949) 497-5690.

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The EP Foundation (a separate entity) is launching its 2009 Membership Drive. Volunteers are being sought to help with marketing, outreach, special events and projects. To become an integral part of EPF and the community enriching activities it plans and promotes, please contact us at (949) 497-5690 or email: info@endangeredplanet.net. Additionally, donations to the Endangered Planet Foundation are being sought to further the mission of the Foundation. By donating to the EPF, you are helping us fund and manage projects and sponsor notable events. For donations - go to: www.EndangeredPlanetFoundation.org

If you do not want to make your donation online, you can still mail us a check or wire-transfer funds to our bank. All donations are fully tax-deductible. EPF is a 501(c)3 organization #20-5931830.

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