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730 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019
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**Forum Gallery to Present
Megan Rye
I Will Follow You Into the Dark
June 6 - July 15, 2011**



Megan Rye, *Alien*, 2008, oil on canvas, 52 x 73 inches

New York – In the first New York solo exhibition of her paintings, *I Will Follow You Into the Dark*, Megan Rye offers an insider's look at the war in Iraq through a series of extraordinary and intimate perspectives. The exhibition will be held at Forum Gallery from June 6 through July 15, 2011.

Based primarily on an archive of over 2,000 photographs taken by her brother while stationed in Iraq as a U.S. Marine, Rye's 17 paintings from 2006 to 2011 offer testimony to memory and history, mystery and the unknown. The viewer is confronted by surreal beauty and the unexpected reality of war.

The painting *Exile in Babylon*, 2011, refers to "Camp Alpha," a U.S. base built on the site of ancient Babylonian ruins. The canvas juxtaposes emblems of the Mesopotamian city, with images that are not usually associated with wartime, such as Marines in Santa suits being fingerprinted and blindfolded like detainees. At the top of the painting is an electronic scoreboard that is based on one from a homeless shelter in the artist's native Minneapolis. This shelter, converted from a former gymnasium, serves the increasing population of homeless veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and poignantly reminds the viewer of who is at home and who is a guest in wartime. This particular scoreboard also illuminates how no one is winning.

Other paintings offer equally unexpected glimpses of the war. Seen through the vision of night goggles, *I Will Follow You Into the Dark*, 2006, depicts Marines building chin-up bars at night in the Sunni Triangle. *Protect You*, 2010, shows a Marine dressed as Elvis for Halloween, and *Alien*, 2008, depicts a Marine in full military uniform with protective goggles and mask.

"When my brother returned from Iraq, he went to a mall, and felt as if the average person didn't even realize that there was a war going on. When you go to an art gallery, it is a very specific place, a place of contemplation where all other distractions fall away. I want to create that space where people can think about and come to terms with their own feelings about the war," notes Rye.

A portion of the exhibition's profits will be donated to organizations benefiting war veterans. In conjunction with the exhibition at Forum Gallery, an exhibition of work by Megan Rye will be on view at the St. Albans Community Living Center, a VA center in Queens. The dates will be announced shortly. She will give an artist talk on June 15 during Veterans Field Day at the Center.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Megan Rye lives and works in Minneapolis. She received her BFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1998 and completed her MFA in painting at the University of Minnesota. In 2007, her first solo exhibition was held at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. In 2005, Rye was a resident at the Skowhegan School of Sculpture in Maine. She is the recipient of a 2008 McKnight Foundation Fellowship; Minnesota State Arts Board Grants in 2004 and 2007; and the 2005 Jerome Foundation Fellowship. Last year, she received one of the largest artists' grants in the country, an Artist Fellowship from the Bush Foundation.

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An opening reception for the artist will be held on Monday, June 6 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Forum Gallery at 730 Fifth Avenue at 57th Street. The entire exhibition may be viewed online at www.forumgallery.com/exhibitions/current-season/.

For more information, please contact:

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