

For Immediate Release
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Premonitions: Recent Paintings by Jovan Villalba
With Sculpture by John R.G. Roth
And Short Films by Kun-I Chang and Youngwoong Jang
January 10 – February 9, 2008



Jovan Villalba / 2006 / The Wall / oil on stainless steel / 14 x 47 inches

January 10, 2008 – New York, NY: Tria Gallery presents *Premonitions* through February 9, 2008. On display will be oil on steel paintings by Jovan Villalba, with sculpture by John R.G. Roth and short films by Kun-I Chang and Youngwoong Jang.

Premonitions

We are at war. Nation against nation. Man against earth. Images of war and storm-torn landscapes surround us, so the dark and apocalyptic imagery in *Premonitions* resonates, capturing feelings of isolation, helplessness, fear, frustration, anger, and sometimes hope. In his paintings, Jovan Villalba finds what he calls the “grandeur of human resilience” in the face of devastation and disaster. John R.G. Roth finds elements of the absurd in American foreign policy and the Iraq war in his sculpture. And Kun-I Chang and Youngwoong Jang paint bleak, futuristic worlds in their short films. The works in *Premonitions* provide thought-provoking forays into the minds and imaginations of these artists, who, despite their different media, become somehow united in their mental landscapes.

Jovan Villalba

The post-modern perspective of *Premonitions*, according to Mr. Villalba, is rendered firmly in the apocalyptic genre. The paintings feature images of sweeping, cataclysmic events. The increasing threat of man-made devastation in forms of biological and nuclear warfare, environmental catastrophe and economic ruin, in conjunction with their magnified portrayal in the media, has created an onslaught of social alarm, and has subversively woven feelings of doom into the fabric of present-day life in America.

Each of Mr. Villalba's paintings depicts a unique panorama exaggerated in a perilous narrative. The bold gestural marks and detailed imagery that combine abstract elements with curious references keep the work simultaneously known and unknown, thus engaging and inviting a viewer to speculate on potential circumstances. One can see the grandeur and nobility of human resilience in Mr. Villalba's paintings, however, and his message is ultimately one of hope

Physically, the works are composed of a stainless steel platform topped by layers of oil paint. Each piece has the potential to transform, as areas of the surface that were left exposed reflect light and motion from its surroundings, filling any void, and imposing a life of its own. This work is a metaphor for a prolific locale that has succumbed to catastrophic events, yet still exudes resolute optimism and the promise of restoration.

Jovan Villalba was born in Quito, Ecuador in 1977, but spent most of his childhood in Miami. Awarded a four year full-tuition scholarship to The Cooper Union School of Art, he received merit grants and was invited to exhibit at The New York Design Center. Since graduating, Mr. Villalba has exhibited his paintings at several galleries in New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, and at Art Basel Miami.

John R.G. Roth

John Roth's sculpture has been displayed in solo exhibitions throughout the country and has received numerous awards. His current work is informed by subjects such as the Iraq war and the connection between America's conspicuous consumption and resource use to foreign policy and war. Despite his serious subject matters, however, Roth never loses his sense of humor -- there is an undeniably playful quality to all of his extremely well crafted pieces.

Kun-I Chang

Kun-I Chang studied communications design at the University of Taiwan and then came to New York to study at The School of Visual Arts, where he earned his MFA in Computer Art in 2006. He is currently working as an independent filmmaker and video artist here in the city, trying to promote motion graphic design as an art form. "Fission," an insightful and visually stunning look at our image-obsessed culture, is Kun-I's first short. It has won over 10 film festival awards and has been screened in over 50 film festivals world-wide.

Youngwoong Jang

Youngwoong Jang received his BFA in Industrial Design in Korea, and his MFA in Computer Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2006. He is currently working as an independent filmmaker and focusing on 3D animation, exploring the connection between the organic and the mechanical. "Progress," he says, "is not always beautiful. In order to develop, sometimes we have to destroy. For me, civilization is a nonstop circular process of construction and deconstruction." "Mirage," which is Youngwoong Jang's first short, is a meditation on life in a bio-mechanical world. It has won over 20 film festival awards and has been screened in over 100 film festivals world-wide.

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Tria Gallery specializes in contemporary painting and mixed media by established and emerging artists. In addition to artwork on exhibit, the gallery maintains an inventory of select works by its featured artists. Tria's three directors, Carol Suchman, Paige Bart and Latifa Metheny, are committed to presenting artists with compelling bodies of work, and ones whose stories, should, in their estimation, be told.

Tria is located in the heart of Chelsea, at 547 West 27th Street, Suite 504, and is open to the public. Hours are Wednesday – Saturday, 11:00-6:00. *Premonitions: New Paintings by Jovan Villalba* runs from January 10 through February 9, 2008. For more information, please visit www.triagallerynyc.com.