

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

504 West 22nd Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10011
212 255 5065

For Immediate Release

NATASHA BOWDOIN

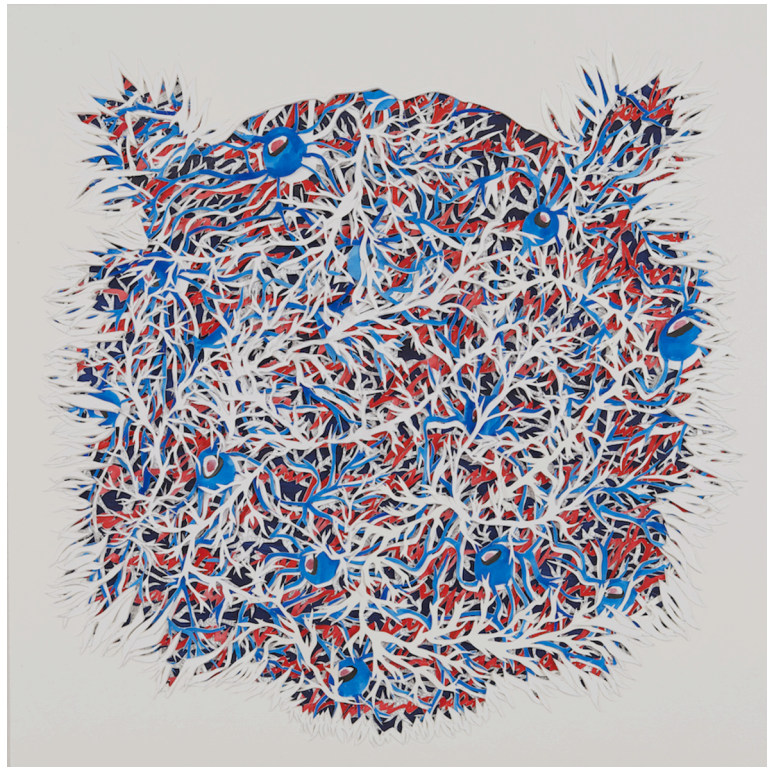
Jungle Book

January 12 – March 10, 2012

Opening reception: Thursday, January 12, 6-8 PM

Monya Rowe Gallery is pleased to announce the first New York solo exhibition of hand-cut drawings by **Natasha Bowdoin** titled *Jungle Book*.

Pushing the boundaries between drawing, sculpture and installation, Bowdoin meticulously constructs layers of cut paper into text culled from various literary sources, often classic literature, such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Jorge Borges' *Dreamtigers*, and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Beyond simple recontextualization, Bowdoin uses language to create pictures of words through interwoven transcriptions, breaking apart and reconfiguring these iconic texts into free flowing rhythms. Bowdoin allows the viewer to depict readable words, *and* readable images. For instance, in "Tiger Mind" (2011), we are noticeably faced with an image of a tiger head arranged from layers of text and gouache, however in "Foolish Fire" (2011), it becomes more difficult to identify what the form actually represents. In essence, the ritual of transcribing text becomes a conduit for hidden interpretations where language defies its' initial intent.



All the work in *Jungle Book* began as direct transcriptions of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, including the passages "I Sing the Body Electric," "To a Stranger" and "Roots and Leaves Themselves Alone." Whitman himself practiced a literary form of collage, rearranging language in an ever-evolving poetic form. The itinerant Whitman's words were literally always on the move, both geographically and in his notebooks where he cut and pasted lines into multitudinous arrangements, and broke language down into increasingly portable units. In both his process and the content of his poetry, Whitman emulated the fluidity of boundaries, between body and nature, body and book, love and lover.

As Bowdoin's work develops, some letters remain recognizable while others are buried and transformed into abstraction. Her dense reconstructions are paeans to Whitman's "free verse" collage process. An excised piece of one drawing might be grafted onto the next. Bowdoin's elegant palimpsests evoke growth and decay, and the uncanny psychological space in which the familiar becomes unnamable. Bowdoin cultivates Whitman's wild flora and fauna into a brimming jungle of words, into which one must venture deep to discover the mysteries within.

Natasha Bowdoin received a MFA from *Tyler School of Art, PA*, a BA and a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate from *Brandeis University, MA*, and also completed studies at *Slade School of Art, London*. She completed a residency at *The Core Program, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, TX* from 2008-2010 and was recently awarded a residency at the *Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts* in Omaha, NE (2012). Bowdoin is the recipient of a *Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant* (2007). Her work has recently been exhibited at *Bryan Miller Gallery, Houston, TX*; *UT Visual Art Center, Austin, TX*; *Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC* and *Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI*. Bowdoin lives and works in Houston, TX.

Image: Natasha Bowdoin, *Tiger Mind*, 2011, pencil, ink and gouache on cut paper, 20 by 20 inches

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11 - 6 PM

Upcoming: Joe Pflieger: March 15 – April 21, Larissa Bates: April 26 – June 23