

## Departure

4 November - 26 December 2015

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Receptions Saturday, 7 November 6-9pm

IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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and Saturday, 5 December 6-9pm

JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY is proud to announce *Departure*, new sculptures and installations by artist **PAUL VILLINSKI**. The exhibition will be on view in the main gallery from 4 November through 26 December 2015 with receptions on **Saturday, 7 November and 5 December** from **6-9pm**. Best known for his hand-cut, recycled aluminum can butterfly and LP vinyl bird installations, as well as, his *Prospect.1* Emergency Response Studio project, Villinski's newest suite of work continues his study of transformation. While retaining the butterfly as the subject and metaphor, Villinski explores other more conceptual works tackling the subjects of addiction, metamorphosis and environmentalism.

Villinski says of the exhibition . . .

*Lately, the things I need to make in the studio seem to choose me, rather than the other way around, probably because I've stopped trying to keep the influence of my own biography in check. After three decades of practice, I'm finally willing to let whatever it is I actually know and care about find form in my work. And, as I grow older, my ideas are increasingly rooted in my childhood. Central to my boyhood, and my work now, are themes of flight; environmental concern and adaptive re-use; community; and addiction and recovery. Although seemingly disparate, in much of my work these are intermingled, united by one more-or-less constant theme: transformation.*

*Underlying everything is the drive to simply share human experience in a way that elicits feelings of recognition and belonging -- an impulse behind much of the history of art. I want to create images and experiences that allow viewers to "identify," to feel our commonality, to know that they are not alone.*

*Much of my work has wings of one sort or another. As an "Air Force brat," I grew up surrounded by planes and pilots with clouds in their eyes, and eventually got my own "ticket." I can't glance out the window without studying the sky and wishing I were in it. I'm not alone in this: from Leonardo to Lindbergh to Lenny Kravitz, the desire to "fly away" has had a grip on our collective imagination for millennia. Now and then, I have the extraordinary luck to spend a few hours floating along on currents of warm air, the earth's surface slipping silently by, the mundane anxieties of daily life thousands of feet below the long, white wings of my glider. Back in the studio, I wish I could bring everyone I've ever met along in the tiny cockpit of my sailplane. Instead, I look for forms to describe the longing to enter the sky, to get us all aloft, even from within the confines of the gallery.*

*Alongside this boyhood fascination was an equally deep concern for the planet. In the mid-Seventies, having dropped-out of high school, the subsistence-level, values-driven, DIY lifestyles of my hippie friends in southern Maine left a deep impression. I identified with environmentalism, naturalism, progressive politics, and utopianist thinking from the moment I could say "Buckminster Fuller." Convinced that there's too much man-made stuff lying around already, I traded my LeFranc and Bourgeois oil paint for detritus I found abandoned on the streets of New York: lost gloves; crushed beer cans; old vinyl LP's; discarded shipping pallets. Many of these "found materials" have poignant associations for me, like broken NYC Police Line barriers, or empty liquor bottles, which resonate with my family's and my own history of addiction and recovery.*

*I try to practice a "simple alchemy," attempting to give these cast-off, "worthless" objects surprising new identities, to infuse their stories with new layers of meaning. The beauty that interests me most comes through the struggle to bring things from a place of loss, poverty, despair, into a new life -- to insist on the possibility*

*of transformation. I want to take these humble, damaged, discarded things and find out what they are capable of -- what can be done with imagination, commitment, risk, labor -- with enough love. My work is an exploration of the possible, at the heart of which is hope.*

Paul Villinski has created studio and large-scale artworks for more than three decades. Villinski was born in York, Maine, USA, in 1960, son of an Air Force navigator. He has lived and worked in New York City since 1982. A scenic route through the educational system included stops at Phillips Exeter Academy and the Massachusetts College of Art, and a BFA with honors from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 1984. He lives with his partner, the painter Amy Park, and their son, Lark, in their studios in Long Island City, NY.

His work has been included in numerous exhibitions nationally, recently including the solo exhibitions “Paul Villinski: Burst” at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, TX and “Passage: A Special Installation,” at the Blanton Museum, University of Texas, Austin. Recent group shows include “Material Transformations” at the Montgomery Museum of Art, Montgomery, AL; “Re: Collection,” at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY; “Making Mends,” at the Bellevue Museum of Arts, Bellevue, WA; and “Prospect .1,” an international Biennial in New Orleans, LA. “Emergency Response Studio,” a FEMA trailer transformed into an off-the-grid mobile artist’s studio, was the subject of a solo exhibition at Rice University Art Gallery, Houston, TX; the exhibition also travelled to Ballroom Marfa, in Marfa, TX; Wesleyan University’s Zilkha Gallery, Middletown, CT; and ERS was featured in the New Museum’s “Festival of Ideas for the New City”, in New York, NY.

Villinski’s work is widely collected, including major commissioned public works including “SkyCycles,” three full-scale “flying bicycles” installed at “Ocean Breeze,” a new Parks and Recreation Track and Field facility on Staten Island, through the New York City Percent for Art Program. “Dreamdesk,” a flying school desk with 18’ wingspan commissioned by the City of New Haven Percent for Art Program, was installed at the East Rock Magnet School in 2014. Permanent collections include the Museum of Arts and Design, NY; the New Orleans Museum of Art, LA; the Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA; Miami International Airport; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, FL; and the University of Michigan Mott Children’s and Von Voitlander Women’s Hospital, Ann Arbor, MI. Corporate collections include Fidelity Investments; Microsoft; Progressive Insurance; the Cleveland Clinic; ADP; McCann Erickson International; New York Life; Ritz-Carlton and many others. He has been a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and has been an Artist-in-Residence at the Serenbe Institute, GA; Socrates Sculpture Park, NY; the Millay Colony, NY; the Ucross Foundation, WY; the Djerassi Foundation, CA; and the Villa Montalvo Arts Center, CA.

His work has frequently been reviewed in periodicals including *ARTnews*; *ArtForum*; *Art in America*; *Sculpture*; *Interior Design*; *Design Bureau*; *New York Magazine*; *ID*; *The New York Times*; *Wall Street Journal*; *Los Angeles Times*; *Washington Post*; *Houston Chronicle*; *International Herald Tribune*; *Village Voice*; *Seattle Times*; *New Haven Register*; *Toronto Star*; *Times-Picayune* and many others.

Paul Villinski lives and works in New York City and is represented by Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans.

For more information, press or sales inquiries please contact the gallery director Matthew Weldon Showman at 504.522.5471 or email [matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com](mailto:matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com).