

**COUTURIER****GALLERY**166 N. LA BREA AVENUE  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90036  
323-933-5557 www.couturiergallery.com

August 10, 2007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**EXHIBITION:**           **GALE ANTOKAL**  
                                  *“The Messengers”*

**DATES:**                **September 8 – October 13, 2007**

**OPENING:**            Artist’s Reception, **Saturday, Sept 8, 6-8pm**

**GALLERY HOURS:**    Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 5pm

**Gale Antokal’s** new solo exhibition, **“The Messengers”**, includes 22 pastel drawings of fleeting moments in time depicting ‘messengers’ on bicycles spreading urgent word of an incident of great import. In this latest body of work, Ms. Antokal again demonstrates her well-known deftness with pastel, graphite, flour and ash on paper, capturing the movement of the messengers as well as their views of the passing landscapes. This show, Antokal's fifth solo exhibition at Couturier Gallery, will have its opening reception on Saturday, September 8, 2007 from 6-8 p.m.

Ms. Antokal continues in this show to use her signature strict monochrome palette. However, in a few of the works, she also introduces a color palette that helps unfolds the mystery and bring about new revelation about the pieces. The unfortunate revelation that seems to emerge is the age-old tragedy of the weak being taken advantage of and tortured by an oppressor. Indeed this theme resonates with what is happening today in many places around the world.

Though these new works are a gracious presentation of what can be perceived as “ordinary” situations, they embark upon much deeper issues that cannot be found with the naked eye. The work was inspired by photographs, but manages to give back what was lost in the photographs, an emotional intimacy and enveloping immensity. Ms. Antokal accomplishes this feat by taking “simple” subject matter – bicyclists, walking feet, a building, etc. – and transcending them with the use of *space*.

“Great space can imply possibility, and therefore hope. But it can also evoke the potential for failure and disappointment, whether through the realization of our insignificance, the futility of individual effort in a world so large, or the inevitable dissolution that awaits us all. Is it optimistic or pessimistic, transcendent vision or denial

of painful reality, that Antokal subjects themselves seem always on the verge of beautifully fading away? Or are these fading subjects an unflinching acknowledgement of our participation in universal flux, albeit one that sympathizes and honors?”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the space dealt with moves beyond that of basic design elements to that of human distance, uninformed experiences and the historical realities that inspire these works. The historical realities that inform these drawings are the murders and victimization of Eastern Europeans in hundreds of locations from 1941 to 1943. In the “Place” drawings we are given possible locations where people were rounded up to be shot. And similarly, in the “Group Shot” images, we are given freeze frame moments of people on their way to being abused and slaughtered. However, the whole collection is anchored by “The Messengers”, images of bicyclists who journey to tell the world of the terrible events. One should also take note that the Hebrew word *malachim* meaning “angels” can also be interpreted as “messengers”.

Gale Antokal was born in New York, New York and received her MFA from the California College of the Arts in 1984. She is an Associate Professor in the School of Art & Design at San Jose State University, California. Antokal held several visiting artist positions and teaching positions including the San Francisco Art Institute, Instructor of Art History at the Lehrhaus Institute, and the American College in Jerusalem. In 1992 she received a Visual Arts Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is included in both private and public collections including the Crocker Museum, Sacramento, CA; The Franklin Company, Los Angeles, CA; The David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Los Altos, CA; MacDonald’s Corporation, San Jose, CA.

**For further information and/or press photos, please contact the gallery.**



*Departure* (2007)  
28” x 42-1/2”

---

<sup>1</sup>Craig Buckwald, The Messengers, catalogue essay