

JAMES KELLY CONTEMPORARY - PRESS RELEASE
616-1/2 Canyon Road - Santa Fe, NM 87501 - 505.989.1601

'Twas the Night Before . . .

Opening Reception: **Thursday**, December 22, 2005, 5:00-7:00 pm
Exhibition Dates: December 22, 2005 – January 26, 2006
Contact: Stephen Husbands: stephen@jameskelly.com



Martin Honert
Nikolaus / Santa Claus, 2002
wood, polyester, polystyrene & paint; edition of 3
Santa Claus & Ruprecht: 84 x 47 x 17 inches, sack: 21 x 20 x 10 inches

James Kelly Contemporary is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition of sculptural works that explore a seasonal theme.

This exhibition will feature five sculptural works by the artists Darren Almond, Nayland Blake, Gary Hume, Katharina Fritsch, and Martin Honert. Focusing on classic icons of winter and the Christmas holiday, the artists explore their own memories and longings, as well as those of the collective culture. These icons betray simple answers, remaining both nostalgic and hopeful.

British sculptor and photographer Darren Almond, from his continuing series based upon British Rail signs, presents *Take Me Home*, a cast brass plaque with black enamel reading "North Star." Often concerned with travel, Almond's sculptures poetically combine the crisp visual vocabulary of industrialization with universal ideas of direction and home.

Nayland Blake has created an ornament like talisman similar to a star or snowflake. A thin chain of buttons and sequins trace a gentle line towards the floor from the top orb, made of jade colored beads, silver key-tags, and wire. These common bits of detritus are elevated into something quietly beautiful and personal, embodying the artist's ancestry and current cultural placement.

Ink Snowman, by British painter and sculptor Gary Hume, sits low and squat, with just two spheres composing the body of this short snowman. Although cast in resin and finished with a smooth deep blue enamel, the artist's hand can still be seen in the modeling of each sphere, the result of hand packing the clay in the original construction. Employing the techniques of a child, the work remembers a time where art was instinctive and playful.

Katharina Fritsch's *St. Nicolas* is a literal depiction of the fourth century Greek bishop, patron saint of commerce and navigation, from whom myths of Santa Claus are derived. A small cast polyester figure, painted in a soft regal purple, it is something of a devotional idol. As such, it serves to comment, often the case with Fritsch's work, on commercialism and reproduction, especially in terms of the Christmas holiday.

Martin Honert's *Niklaus*, a much larger figure made of wood, polyester, and rich gold paint, instead focuses on the saint's mythology. In addition to his bag of gifts, his impish companion Ruprecht, the punisher of bad children, accompanies Niklaus on his shoulder. Directly taken from drawings in the artist's childhood sketchbook, this Niklaus is that of the artist's and Germany's collective memory. An adult work from a childhood archive the work separates itself from the past but perpetuates its own history.

James Kelly Contemporary is located at 616-1/2 Canyon Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Gallery hours for the duration of this show are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00-5:00 p.m. - Saturday from 12:00-5:00 p.m. - Monday by appointment. Please call the gallery at 505.989.1601 - fax 505.989.5005 - email stephen@jameskelly.com for more information.

- high resolution images available upon request -