

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2008

## John Alexander: *New Paintings and Drawings*

**Artist Reception:** Friday, April 18, 2008, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

**Exhibition Dates:** April 18 through May 31, 2008

McClain Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new drawings, landscapes, and figurative oil paintings by artist John Alexander. Born and raised in Beaumont, both Alexander and his work have deep ties to Southeast Texas. His compositions range from a vivid cast of characters set amid swampy, moonlit landscapes to naturalistic-inspired sketches of coastal birds, to portraits laden with political and social satire. Alexander has described his art as "highly personal and very much about what my experiences in the world have been, not in an illustrative way, but in a real emotional way that is universal."

Alexander's father, a nature enthusiast, bestowed him with a deep appreciation and respect of the Gulf Coast's natural environment and its inhabitants. As a result, he celebrates flora and fauna in his work – beautifully executed, as if he were recording wildlife for posterity. Alexander's work is also influenced by the political and religious undertones of mid-20th century Southeast Texas and often reveals personal, and mostly humorous, interpretations of culture and politics. He highlights this dialogue through the depiction of animal/human hybrids: an animal head on a human body suggests character weakness or flaws, and props such as money illustrate greed, gold crowns identify vanity, while draped flags suggest political misuse. Masked characters further exaggerate this commentary and allude to hidden motives and actions in contemporary culture.

John Alexander is included in many notable museum collections including: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Dallas Museum of Art; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art.

Alexander's first break-through was a solo exhibition held at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston in 1975. Then in 1977 he received national attention by being included at the Corcoran Biennial in Washington, D.C. He is the recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1981), and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (1984). John Alexander (b. 1945) received his BFA from Lamar University, in Beaumont, Texas, and his MFA from Southern Methodist University. After teaching for almost a decade at the University of Houston, Alexander followed the art scene to New York in the late 1970s, where he established himself as an important American and international artist. He currently lives and works in New York City and Amagansett, New York.

### **John Alexander: A Retrospective**

From December 21, 2007, to March 16, 2008, The Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., hosted the exhibition, "John Alexander: A Retrospective," spanning the artist's three-decade career. "John Alexander: A Retrospective," opens at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, on April 13, 2008, and will be on view through June 22, 2008.

McClain Gallery is located at 2242 Richmond Avenue, Houston, Texas 77098. T. 713.520.9988, F. 713.520.9955, [www.mcclaingallery.com](http://www.mcclaingallery.com).

**Gallery Hours:** Tuesday - Friday: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.