

For Immediate Release – April 2007

Greenberg Van Doren to present two-person exhibition

# Emi Avora | Julia Kunin

## Against Nature

May 16 – June 22, 2007

Greenberg Van Doren Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of recent paintings by London-based Greek artist Emi Avora and new work by New York artist Julia Kunin. Emi Avora / Julia Kunin: *Against Nature* is on view from May 16 through June 22, 2007.

The exhibition title is from the 19<sup>th</sup> century French novel (*À Rebours*) by Joris-Karl Huysmans, a book that catalogues decadence, taste, and beauty according to its primary character, named Des Esseintes. *À Rebours* broke from naturalism, advancing the transition of Romanticism into Decadence and the Aesthetic movement. Like the Huysmans novel, the individual works of Emi Avora and Julia Kunin compulsively suggest surreal realms and ways of seeing. Their differing ways of creating sensory overload verge on the obsessive, holding a mirror to contemporary society's desire for beauty, luxury and excess.

The exhibition features new paintings (all dated 2006-07) by Emi Avora of imagined ornate interiors of public spaces designed for cultural communion: theatre lobbies, opera houses, balconies and ballrooms. Avora's images – which are partly inspired by contemporary lifestyle magazines as well as the artist's sojourns to European castles and churches - are loosely but lovingly rendered in glazed oils and become pictures of invented history and hallowed and disintegrating beauty.

Julia Kunin will present recent sculptures (all glazed porcelain, dated 2007) which are composed of elements cast from sea creatures, insects, and others forms from the natural world. Kunin gathers these sometimes miniature creatures – including turtles, flies, and snails - into complicated baroque structures, which are glazed in brilliant hues. Ornate and jewel toned, the ornamental quality of Kunin's ceramic work belie the fact that they address serious ideas about beauty and decay, sensuality, nature and death.

Emi Avora was born 1978, Greece, and currently lives and works in London. Avora was educated at The Royal Academy of Arts and Oxford University and has exhibited at The Whitechapel Gallery and Contemporary Art Projects, London, among others. Julia Kunin was born in Burlington, VT, and currently lives and works in Williamsburg. Kunin studied at Wellesley College and Rutgers University and her numerous exhibitions include Karyn Lovegrove, LA, Sandra Gering Gallery, NY and Artists Space, NY.

Greenberg Van Doren Gallery is located at 730 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 57<sup>th</sup> Street, NY, NY, 10019. Gallery Hours are Tuesday – Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM. Please contact the gallery for more information.