

# JASON MCCOY INC.

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For Immediate Release

## **Rachel Hovnanian: Power & Burden of Beauty**

November 5 – December 22, 2007

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 5, 5 – 7 pm



*Beauty Queen Totem, 2009, Carrara Bianco Marble, Height: 9 feet*

Jason McCoy Inc. is pleased to present a multi-media installation by Rachel Hovnanian. This ambitious presentation expands Hovnanian's ongoing exploration of the seductive quality of memories and deep stereotypes as they pertain to beauty. It also reflects the artist's lifelong struggle to make sense of her place in a society that continually puts women and beauty on a pedestal – as a way to garner one's intelligence, importance and role.

While Hovnanian's previous body of work, entitled *Preservation of the Narcissus*, was inspired by society's obsession with preserving beauty as a means to preserve youth, *Power & Burden of Beauty* explores how beauty can both empower those who possess it, but also emotionally as well as psychologically challenge those who strive for it in vain. Hovnanian's visual vocabulary includes pageant winners in the artist's home state of Texas, along with their trophies, flowers, tiaras and formal wear, as well as paintings and sculptures of swimsuits, cosmetics and the retail environment that surrounds and supports them. Overall, the installation unfolds as a study of how beauty is ritualized in society, be it at home or in the media.

In his essay for the catalog, which accompanies this exhibition, Michael Clive writes:

*"Hovnanian's work inhabits a world in which personal beauty is endlessly commodified, measured and contested; the fact that we all live there too does not diminish its power to appall. She is asking us, as viewers, to consider how our conditioned response to surface beauty substitutes for deeper, more enduring notions of the beautiful in just the same manner that consumption substitutes for deeper values... Hovnanian provides a viewing experience not unlike watching the arc of a boomerang in flight. It's captivating, but it may be right on target for your neck."*

Allowing the viewers to come to their own conclusions, Hovnanian presents us with imagery that refers to how women are valued for their physical appearance. Employing wit, absurdity and humor as expressive means, Hovnanian creates works that question our understanding of "What is beauty?" and "Who is the most beautiful?"

Rachel Hovnanian lives and works in New York. This will be the second exhibition of Hovnanian's work at the gallery. A catalogue will be published and available through the gallery.

Please contact the Stephanie Simmons at 212-319-1996 or [stephanie@jasonmccoyinc.com](mailto:stephanie@jasonmccoyinc.com) for further information.