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## Fact Sheet “Alexis Rockman: A Fable for Tomorrow”

### Exhibition

“Alexis Rockman: A Fable for Tomorrow”

Nov. 19, 2010 – May 8, 2011

### Location

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Eighth and F streets N.W.

### Description

Alexis Rockman (b. 1962) has been depicting the natural world with virtuosity and wit for more than two decades. His extensive body of work combines art history, science and popular culture to address a wide range of subjects from evolutionary biology and genetic engineering to deforestation and global climate change. Each exquisitely rendered painting is an amalgam of historical research, scientific observation and unbridled imagination. Rockman’s sources include botanical illustrations, museum dioramas, 19th-century landscape painting, science fiction films and firsthand field study. From these diverse explorations, he has built a universe of species and scenarios that confound basic perceptions of the living world. His vivid images transport the viewer to a place that is at once bountiful and besieged, where long-extinct creatures inhabit the ruins of modern monuments and household pets drift among the cosmos. This ability to straddle the boundary between empirical fact and plausible fiction has garnered the attention of scientists and art critics alike. Whether painting the urban jungle of his native New York City, the tropical forests of Guyana or the frozen waters of Antarctica, Rockman creatively captures the tension between nature and culture evinced by our increasingly fragile ecosystem.

“Alexis Rockman: A Fable for Tomorrow” is the first major survey of the artist’s work and will feature approximately 80 paintings and works on paper from private and public collections. The exhibition will trace Rockman’s artistic development from the mid-1980s to the present. Highlights include such masterworks as “Evolution” (1992), his first mural-sized painting, and “Manifest Destiny” (2004), commissioned by the Brooklyn Museum of Art. His work has been exhibited at galleries and museums worldwide, including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Wexner Center for the Arts, the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Camden Arts Centre, London. The exhibition is being organized by Joanna Marsh, The James Dicke Curator of Contemporary Art.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum, located above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station, is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Web site: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

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