

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Jon Kessler**  
***the Outsider***  
April 29 – June 4, 1999

On April 29, 1999, Luhring Augustine is proud to premiere a new piece by sculptor Jon Kessler. *the Outsider* confronts humankind's need to construct the idea of pure nature, and believe in it.

When standing in front of the sculpture, the viewer looks at a bird on an elevator, while the bird in turn is looking at a photo transparency of the rain forest, its ancestral abode. The photo is not, however, an image of an actual rain forest, but of a diorama of a rain forest that was constructed in the studio. This photo was then deconstructed, separated into the four colors of the printing process. These separations slowly shift in continual motion, until the bird emerges out of the sculpture's base on the elevator and reaches the top of its perch, when for several seconds, the transparency stops in perfect register and the bird has the opportunity to study it. As the bird begins to descend, the transparency once again breaks its register and begins to shift.

Kessler was initially inspired by Casper David Freidrich's painting *The Wanderer Above the Mists*, in which a male figure, seen from behind, looks out over a landscape. *the Outsider* refers to the human condition of being disconnected from the self and from the natural order of things. Our access to the outside is always, to varying degrees, mediated by culture. The notion of unspoiled nature is a fantasy, albeit a beautiful one. It can even be argued that what we call "the wilderness" is already marked by human intervention. However, *the Outsider* is less a critique of our blatant exploitation of the environment, than a celebration of the beauty of our visions of the "outside," and of our cultural construction of Nature.

Jon Kessler's work has appeared in solo and group shows worldwide, and is in the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art, NY, The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, The Saatchi Collection, London, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, The Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The Deste Foundation, Athens, and the Israel Museum Jerusalem. Comprehensive catalogues of his work were published by Puerto de Santander, Spain and Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover

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