

As seen in the
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 AMERICAN
art COLLECTOR





THE FALL, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 30 X 48"

KEVIN SLOAN

The cabinet of curiosities



UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 15 works

Jan. 20-Feb. 2, 2011

Gardner Colby Gallery

386 Broad Avenue South

Naples, FL 34102

(239) 403-7787

• SHOW LOCATION NAPLES, FL



Artist Kevin Sloan in his Santa Fe, New Mexico-based studio. PHOTO BY BILL STENDEL

If you were wealthy in the Renaissance and were interested in discoveries happening around the world, you might have had a cabinet of curiosities built for yourself—either a case in your study or an entire room devoted to the new and the odd.

You would have displayed the unexplained curiosities (science hadn't caught up with the myriad discoveries) in equally curious juxtapositions because you wouldn't have known how they actually relate.

Enter Kevin Sloan in 21st-century America. Working in the high desert of New Mexico, Sloan paints the flora and fauna of more exotic climes. He grew up in Iowa and then traveled—Philadelphia and Tucson for art school and then California, New Orleans, and Key West. Living in the desert, he finds the worlds he experienced elsewhere have become

even more exotic for him.

His admirers may see references to Martin Johnson Head and John James Audubon in his lush tableaux—and they would be right. Sloan likes Head's peripatetic "story." Head took extended trips to Europe and Latin America and, at the age of 64, he settled in Florida, far from his upbringing in the Northeast. Sloan also acknowledges a debt to Audubon, who is known for his series of paintings on the birds of America and especially for the colored engravings that were published later in book form. Sloan's series of small paintings based on Audubon's work are titled *Birds of America* and bear an inscription on the back of the canvas thanking Audubon for his "collaboration."

Sloan wonders at the contradictions in Audubon who catalogued over 700 birds with scrupulous accuracy. Audubon was also a

hunter and would shoot hundreds of birds on a good day. In turn, he was one of the first to write about loss of animal habitat in America.

The Age of Discovery that brought about cabinets of curiosity has become the Age of Loss today, according to Sloan whose upcoming exhibition is aptly titled *The Cabinet of Curiosities*. That is a prominent theme in his work. He has chosen to celebrate the endangered and the extinct.

Sloan's paintings begin with the gesso he coats on his canvas. He retains the swirls and ridges that occur when he applies the gesso and "plays with what the surface suggests." The imperfections of the surface often suggest elements of the composition although the principal element is always placed first. The sea turtle in *Tropical Tableau*, for instance, was placed and replaced before it ended up where



THE TIMES, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 60 X 54"





◀ **TROPICAL TABLEAU**, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 48 x 48"

▲ **THE PRESERVE**, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 60 x 54"

The Collector Says . . .

I love that Kevin Sloan's paintings are beautiful and have a high quality of craftsmanship. They are mysterious, whimsical and have a sense of humor... making them very easy to live with.

— *Eleanor McDonald*

we see it now. Sloan knew the turtle would be out of its element—inside—and pondered how he could give it a purpose for “swimming” around. Balanced on the beach ball, the turtle can go through the motions of swimming to its heart’s content—and get nowhere.

The whooping cranes of *The Preserve* stand in the shallow water of a wading pool with one of our ancestors overseeing their care in their reduced habitat and amusing himself by sailing a toy boat among their legs. Whooping cranes were nearly extinct in the 1940s

when there were only 16 birds. Careful conservation has raised the number to nearly 300. Sloan encourages us to make a connection between the wonderful and rare birds and the elaborate porcelain vase in the background—the rare in nature and the rare among the manmade. ●

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to

www.americanartcollector.com

