

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

JEANNE DUNNING

Reception for the artist, Friday, February 18, 2011, 5:00 to 7:00 PM

Jeanne Dunning's new still lifes are classical: sumptuous arrays of fruits and vegetables, bread, cheese and wine are arranged on dark drapery, seeming to anticipate a leisurely feast and to celebrate the opulence of the harvest. The still life genre is intertwined with the *vanitas* tradition, with foodstuffs often depicted in the early stages of spoilage and taken as reminders of life's impermanence. Dunning takes this to an extreme in these works, where decay and deterioration have been given free reign. These images serve as a far more extreme reminder of our own mortality than even the traditional still life. More time has passed, the decomposition is more advanced, and it has taken on a life of its own.

Dunning's work has long explored our ambivalent and often contradictory feelings towards our own bodies, including our attachment to bodily ideals over imperfect reality and our denial of our own mortality. These images exhibit similar contradiction and ambivalence, with growth perplexingly co-existing with dissolution. Seemingly fresh tomatoes dangle from a mold-covered vine. Turnips sprout new florescent green shoots even as they decompose. Burgeoning crops of mold bloom into explosions of colorful polka dots or overtake bowls of fruit like luxurious pelts of fur. The mold and corruption simultaneously seduce with their beauty and repel as grotesque and contaminated, creating a powerful tension in this work.

Jeanne Dunning first came to prominence as an artist in the late 1980's and early 1990's with a series of photographic and video works that delve into issues surrounding the body, gender and sexuality. Her work has been widely exhibited internationally during the intervening years. Most recently, her project *Tomato Fight* was staged at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in November. She lives and works in Chicago and this is her first exhibition at Donald Young Gallery.

The reception is free and open to the public. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 to 5:30 and Saturday, 11:00 to 5:30. If you would like more information, please contact Emily Letourneau or Robyn Farrell at 312.322.3600 or gallery@donaldyoung.com.