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Robert Fishko, *Director*

For Immediate Release

**STEPHANIE WILDE**  
***Murder of Crows***

May 31 – June 29, 2018

**New York, NY** – Forum Gallery presents *Murder of Crows*, an exhibition of eight new paintings by self-taught artist Stephanie Wilde. The body of work presented in this exhibition speaks to the polarizing effects of race, religion and political views with a visual subtext of the historical pattern of prejudice. The exhibition title is an emblematic reference to flock behavior, herding and mob mentality, bred routinely throughout history by these deep divides.

Working in ink and acrylic on museum board, Wilde adds gold leaf to her densely-layered, sumptuous imagery. Her delicate renderings reference intricate Renaissance textile designs, illuminated manuscripts, and Persian miniatures. Curator and educator Diana L. Daniels writes in the catalogue essay that the paintings “aim to delight the eye, but within such delicate renderings she displays a zest for the subversive. Wilde expands upon the moralizing bent of seventeenth-century Dutch masters of *vanitas* subjects to offer cautionary tales of our present perils.”

*Intentional Silence*, 2017-18, is one of three works in the exhibition that addresses racial divides directly. The women depicted represent slaves owned by Joshua John Ward (1800-1853), who held several plantations in South Carolina during the nineteenth century and was the largest American slaveholder during his lifetime. A companion piece, *Intentional Silence II*, 2018, is an installation of twenty small-scale paintings, each referencing a specific quilt pattern. The motifs chosen—whether tumbling blocks for departure, the North Star for direction, or the log cabin for a warm hearth—relate to oral histories of emancipation via the Underground Railroad.<sup>1</sup> The diptych *Fields of Worth*, 2015, with its imagery of fathers and sons and mothers and daughters, surrounded by sprays of cotton flowers and bolls, reminds us of the harsh legacy of slavery and the resilience of these individuals.

*Sisters*, 2015, portrays Sarah Moore Grimké (1792–1873) and Angelina Emily Grimké (1805–1879), known as the Grimké sisters, who were among the first American female advocates of abolition and women’s rights. Born into a slave-holding family in the South, their feminist writings and public speeches advocating for equality were considered radical and controversial in the time before the Civil War. Their pioneering work addressed many issues that remain very relevant to the modern feminist movement, 150 years later.

Other works in the series, such as *Daphne II*, 2016 and *Miasma*, 2017, reference Greek mythology and highlight processes of transformation and our relationship to the natural world. Wilde appropriates the stories of Daphne and Miasma to voice her determination that a transformation of humankind is required in order to restore health to our world’s human and environmental situations. The installation titled *The Bones Are the Same*, 2017, includes twelve paintings to reference twelve of the world’s major religions. The artist writes that “our bones are all the same regardless of color, politics, economic status or religion.” Finally, *Finding the Graces*, 2018, evokes the idea that the society we have is the society we seek. As proposed by psychologist and social theorist Erich Fromm (1900–1980), we must acquire the character we want and express it as a group. Our inner drives can be exerted as outer forces in order to reshape our mass behavior.

*Murder of Crows*, on view from May 31 – June 29, 2018, is the first solo exhibition at Forum Gallery for Idaho-based artist Stephanie Wilde. Wilde has received three Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts through the Idaho Arts Commission, the State of Idaho Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, and the Idaho Mayor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. In 2015, she was given a prestigious Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant for painting. Her work is placed in numerous public and private collections, including The William Louis-Dreyfus Foundation in Mount Kisco, New York, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

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**Stephanie Wilde: *Murder of Crows*** opens with a reception for the artist on Thursday, May 31, 2018 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm, and will be on view through Friday, June 29, 2018.

**Forum Gallery is located at 475 Park Avenue at 57<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10022. Please visit [forumgallery.com/exhibitions/current-season](http://forumgallery.com/exhibitions/current-season) to view the entire exhibition online. The exhibition begins on May 31, 2018 and will be on view through June 29, 2018. A full-color catalogue is available from the gallery.**

**Summer Hours: Forum Gallery is open Monday through Friday from 10 AM until 5:30 PM, and closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from June 1 to September 3, 2018.**

**For more information, please contact Kevin Dao, 212-355-4545; [kevin@forumgallery.com](mailto:kevin@forumgallery.com)**

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<sup>1</sup> Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, PhD, have written about various African-American oral histories regarding the use of quilts as signals to join the Underground Railroad.