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John Kleckner, *That Didn't Exist*

Be Forewarned by John Kleckner

John Kleckner gives Melbourne a melancholic world premiere, unveiling previously unseen collages alongside local artist Riley Payne at Tristian Koenig.

By Brett Hamm, 11th May 2011

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Tonight night gallerist Tristian Koenig will present a world first for Melbourne when acclaimed American artist John Kleckner debuts new work at Koenig's eponymous South Yarra gallery.

In a show running from 12 May until 18 June, Kleckner will unveil previously unseen collages alongside works from emerging Melbourne favourite, Riley Payne.

Having parted ways with Melbourne gallery Neon Parc at the end of 2010 (where he was co-director), Koenig has managed something of a coup securing the premiere from a major American contemporary artist whose works grace the collections of London's Saatchi Gallery as well as the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Kleckner's works combine collage with exquisitely detailed ink and graphite drawings, with this exhibition featuring recurring themes of birds, flies, fish and the female form. Payne's work, with its obsessively detailed graphite and charcoal illustrations, has an obvious natural kinship to Kleckner's more celebrated work and easily demonstrates why his reputation is on the rise.

Both artists' work exudes a sense of foreboding melancholia, regret and cultural malaise. *Be Forewarned* is the apt title of one of Kleckner's pieces, and there can be no better advice for those planning to view this unique exhibition. While the works themselves reflect the darker ghosts lurking behind everyday forms, the opportunity to view them in the flesh is a rare joy.

Be Forewarned is on at Tristian Koenig gallery until June 18.

www.tristiankoenig.com.au

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