



THERE IS HOPE
GV Art Group show

The star-spangled symbolism of Barack Obama's inauguration as the 44th President of the United States is difficult to ignore. For those who consider Obama the very personification of America's lavish idealism, the election of the nation's first black president provided evidence that the very principles enshrined in the nation's constitution were not hollow words, as many more cynical observers might suggest, but virtues grounded within concrete social and political realities. Such passionate beliefs have found natural expression in much of the effusive praise that both preceded and followed Obama's triumph: the secular messiah who preached to the faithful on the streets of Berlin, and the sun-kissed hero of the Hawaiian beaches whose robust physicality heralds the dawn of a new utopian age. The Obama era is, they assure us, one full of hope.

Yet the burden of hope may prove to be a weighty one. Can the immensity of hope be contained in so fragile a vessel? Will such hopes fall victim to the on-going struggle between the forces of idealism and political expediency? Is the collective hope of this new age truly universal? If the politics of hope are complex, then the broader meanings of the term are still more difficult to grasp. Is hope individual or collective? Sacred or profane? And what of the symbiotic relationship between hope and despair? Yet perhaps hope will always defy definition for, as Samuel Johnson remarks, it is a product of the the human spirit and thus in a state of perpetual flux;

"The natural flights of the human mind are not from pleasure to pleasure
but from hope to hope."

These natural flights of the creative imagination are captured by artists featured in GV Art's new group show, **There is Hope**. In the physical, psychological and political landscapes they create, hope takes on different forms; both natural and man-made, at once immediate yet remote. Yet despite this diversity, common themes emerge. Fragile, compassionate and transcendent, hope is shown as being at the core of our humanity. It is a trait that continues to survive in times of adversity. It is the ultimate triumph of the human spirit in a world of intolerance, cruelty and suffering.

Jonathan Hutt PhD, Shanghai-London, January 2009