

# Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view: east wall

Kathrin Sonntag

*Problems and Solutions*

November 9 – December 4, 2017

# Thomas Erben Gallery

"In the Hollywood movie *Apollo 13*, a group of scientists and engineers manage to square the circle in an emergency situation: three astronauts in space are in danger of suffocating because of an exploded oxygen tank and a defective air filter. Despite all precautions and careful planning the engineers are faced with the problem of finding a way to connect the air filter systems of the space shuttle and the lunar landing craft (one of which is circular and the other square), and succeed by using basic tools. In the high-tech showpiece space shuttle, the three astronauts' lives are saved with the help of a piece of cardboard, a urine pouch, a tennis sock and adhesive tape. This scene illustrates the mechanism of provisional solutions: depending on the means available in the given circumstances, they are the result of the motivation to act in an unforeseen emergency and the decision: this is how we're going to tackle this problem for the time being."<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Erben Gallery is excited to present its first solo exhibition with German artist, Kathrin Sonntag, whose practice encompasses photography, sculpture, film, and installation. Her work was last exhibited in New York at the Guggenheim's [Photo-Poetics](#) during winter 2015/16.

Playfully disrupting viewers' perception, Sonntag's work sows confusion across space, time, object, and architecture, blurring the line between photography and reality. Her exhibitions frequently incorporate the sites her works are exhibited at, using life-sized photographic wallpaper and careful installation to transfigure the exhibition space into a zone of heightened perception.

With *Problem and Solutions*, an ongoing photography series by the artist, Sonntag has been documenting examples of makeshift solutions made by ordinary people for quotidian problems. The photographs capture a provisional character — ad-hoc, inventive, sometimes crude solutions that Sonntag wryly chronicles, speaking to the (immediate) questions of life.

Bearing the same name, Sonntag's exhibition itself ultimately shares this provisional appeal. Working at the gallery for the show during August, Sonntag photographed a range of whimsical setups, using objects at hand in the gallery to display a selection of images from her series. The results were transferred 1:1 to photographic wallpapers, which — displayed with corresponding objects — reenter the gallery's space.

By creating unusual solutions to the problem of presenting *Problems and Solutions*, the installation echoes the makeshift character documented in the photographs, redoubling: *this is how we're going to tackle this problem for the time being*.

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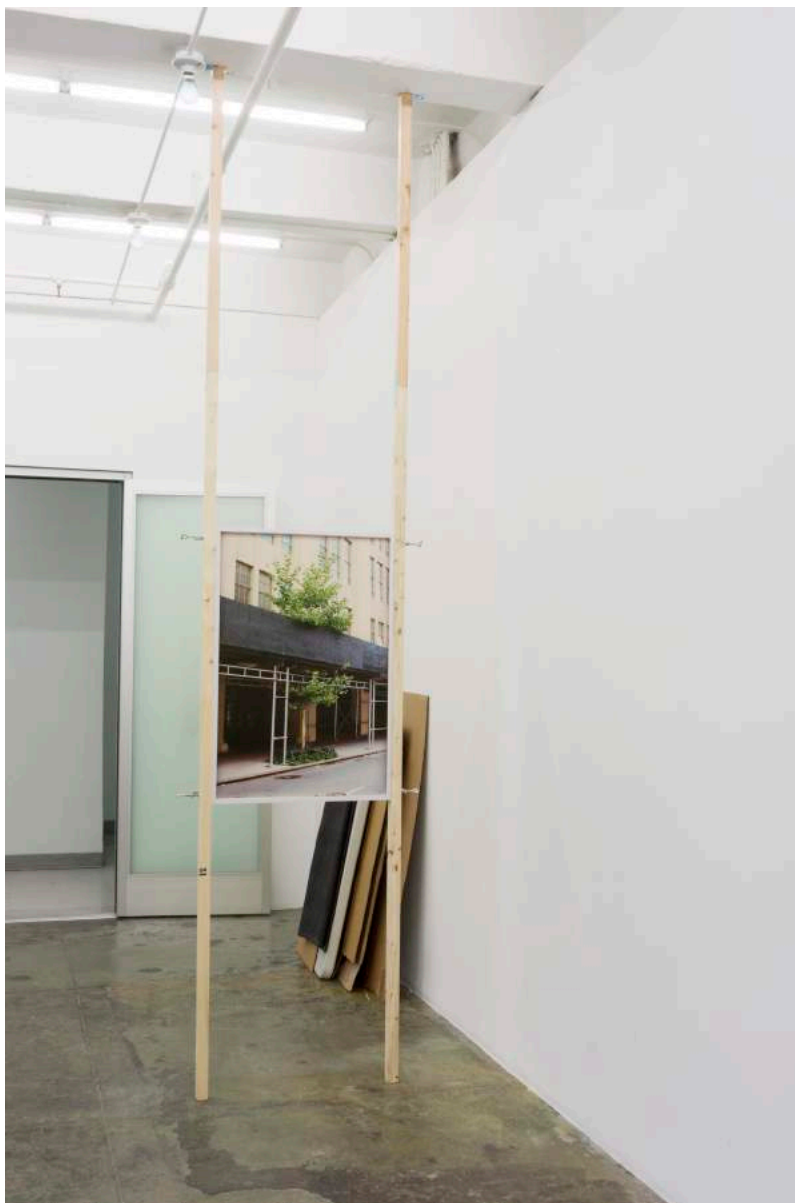
<sup>1</sup> 1. Antje Havemann & Margit Schild. "'You Can Use My Tights' or: The Phenomenon of Temporary Solutions." *Landscape Research*, Vol. 32, no. 1 (February 2007): 45-55.

# Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view: north wall

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 5, 2017.*

Photographic wallpaper mounted on wooden panel, wood slats  
(variable length), metal joints

37 x 25 in.

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$6,000

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 2, 2017.*

Photographic wallpaper, black tape

138 x 53 in. (length variable)

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$6,000

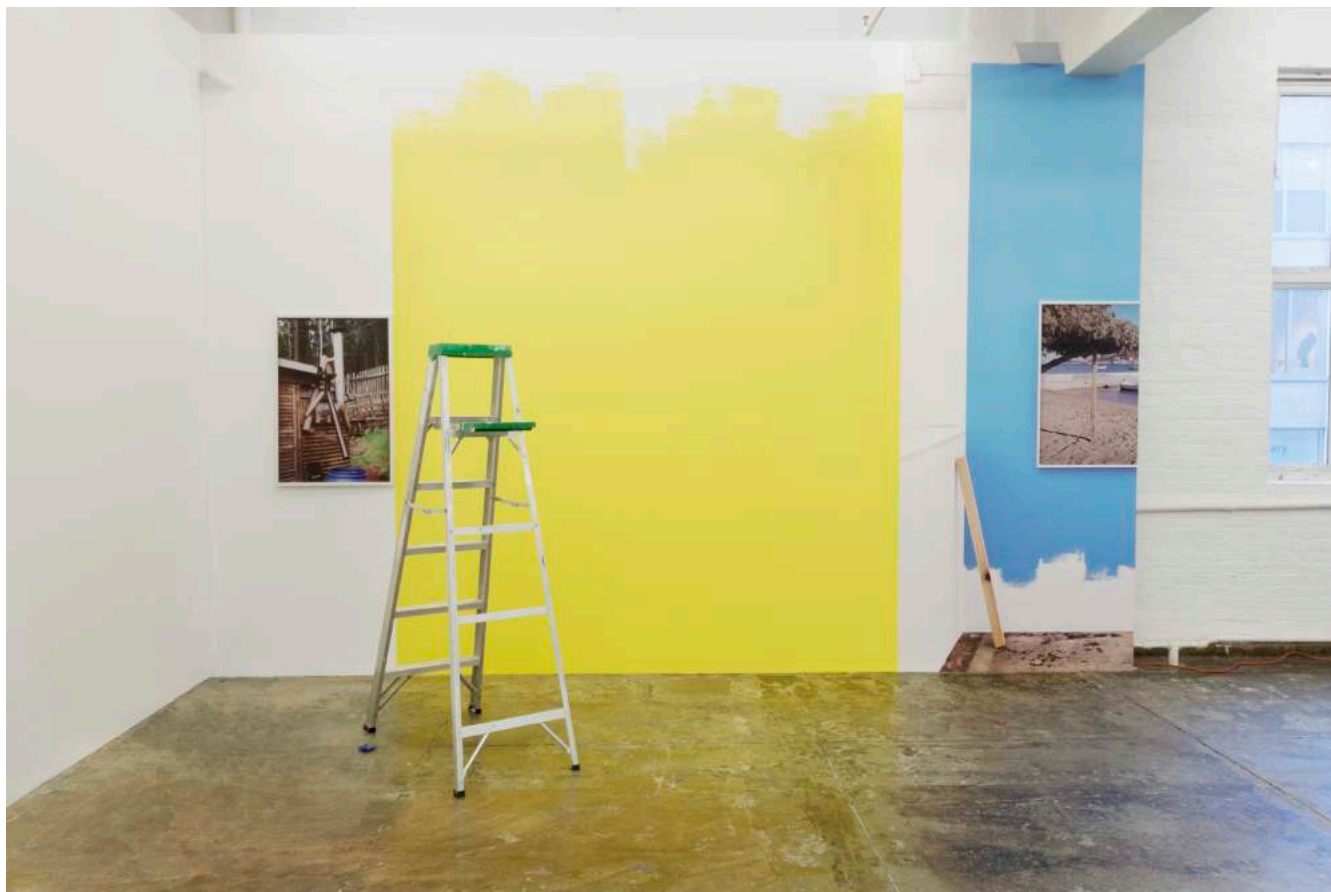
# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 1*, 2017.  
Photographic wallpaper, stones, rope  
138 x 53 in. (length variable)  
ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$7,500

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 4, 2017.*

Photographic wallpaper mounted on wooden panel, photographic wallpaper, painted wall (dimensions variable), ladder, masking tape  
Photographic object: 37 x 25 in., photographic wallpaper: 138 x 53 in. (length variable)  
ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$10,500

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 4, 2017.*  
(detail)



# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 4, 2017.*  
(detail)

# Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view: east and south wall

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 6, 2017.*

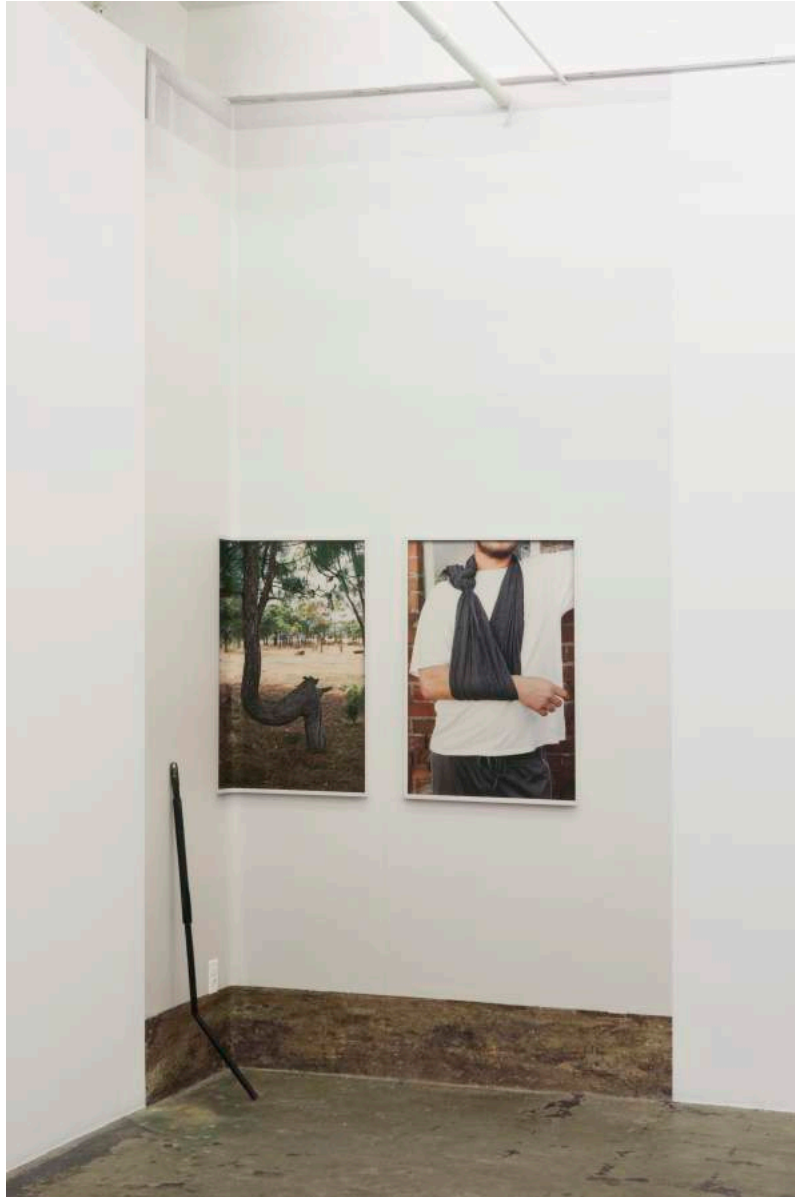
Photographic wallpaper mounted on wooden panel, painted wall (dimensions variable)

25 x 37 in.

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$4,500

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 11, 2017.*

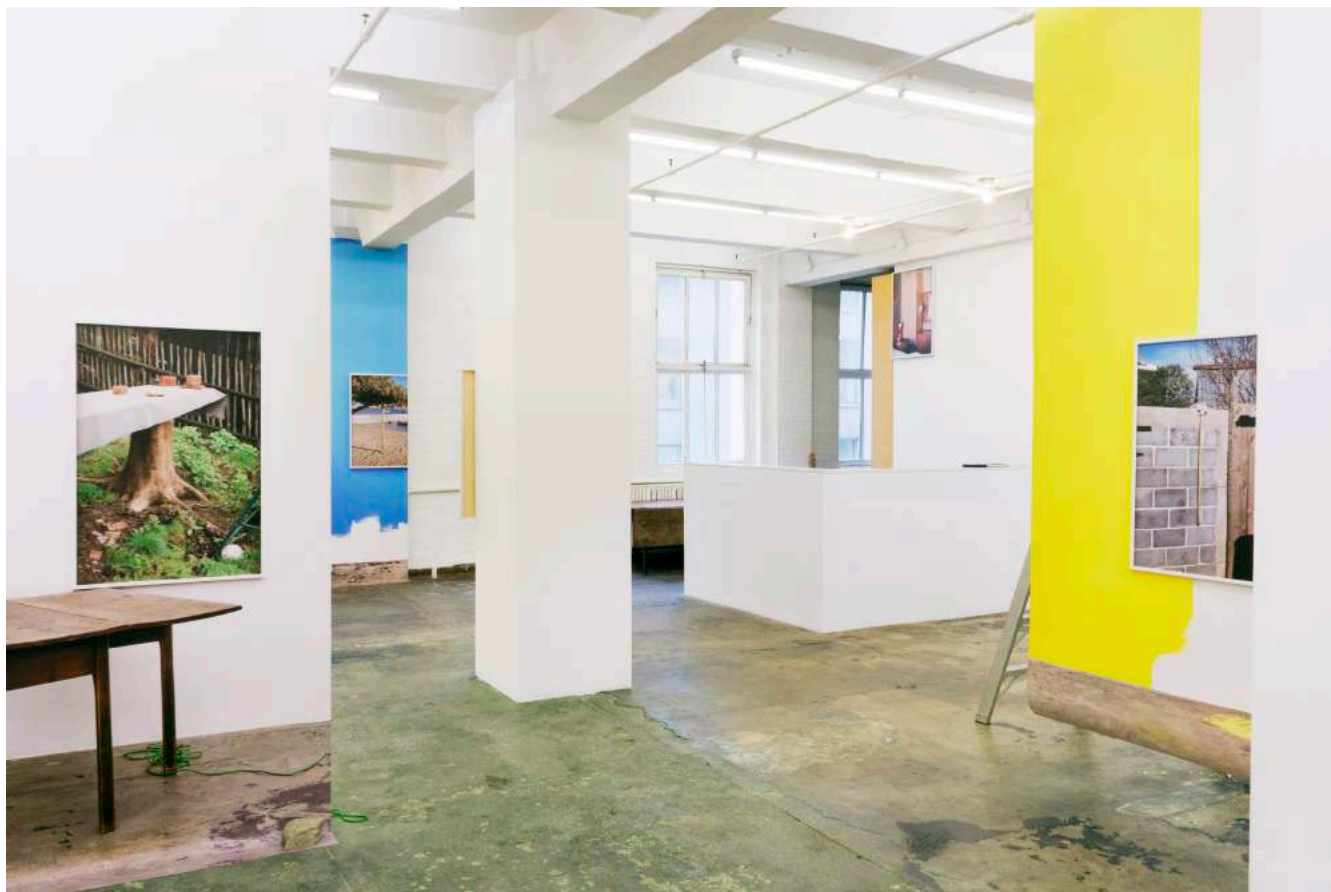
Photographic wallpaper, found object

138 x 89 in. (length variable)

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$7,500

# Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view: north and east wall

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 7, 2017.*

Photographic wallpaper mounted on wooden panel

25 x 37 in.

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$4,500

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 3, 2017.*  
Photographic wallpaper, ladder, paint roller and rod, paint cans  
138 x 53 in. (length variable)  
ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$10,500

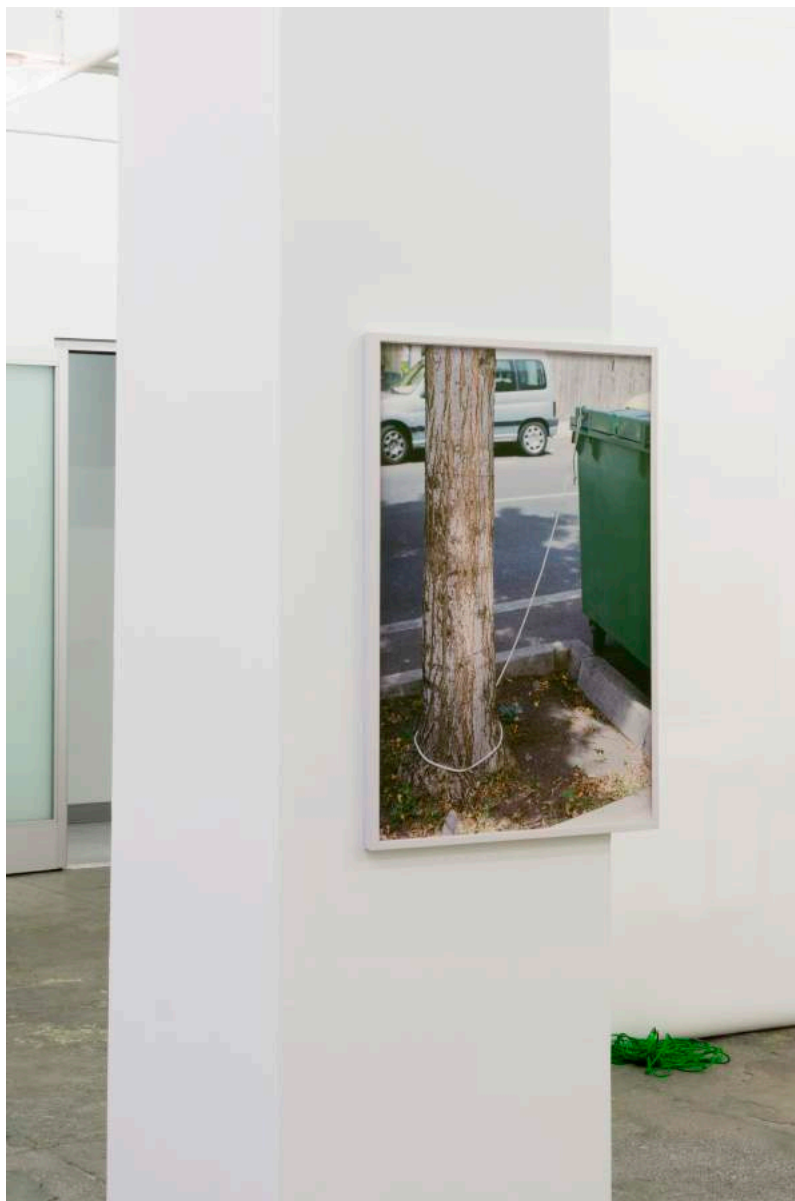
# Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view: south wall



# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 8, 2017.*

Photographic wallpaper mounted on wooden panel on column

25 x 37 in.

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$4,500

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 9*, 2017.

Photographic wallpaper mounted on wooden panel, strapped to column  
25 x 37 in.

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$4,500

# Thomas Erben Gallery



*Problems and Solutions: Section 10, 2017.*

Photographic wallpaper mounted on wooden panel, folding table, blanket  
25 x 37 in.

ed. of 2 (+1 AP)

\$6,000

# Thomas Erben Gallery

Also available:



*End of Quote*, 2017.

Photographic wallpaper, framed inkjet print

Wallpaper: 105 x 24 in., framed inkjet print: 28 x 18 in.

ed. of 3.

\$7,500

In the work, *End of Quote*, Sonntag plays with the viewer's perception, toying with the distinctions between actual, perceived, and photographic space. Sonntag positions a framed photograph of a wallpaper, taken during the deinstallation of a previous show, over the same wallpaper fragment. Objects, such as a playing card, appear within the images as well as within the gallery, linking the different levels of representation that run through the artwork. Rather than serving to efficiently document, photography becomes a force of friction – an ironic medium that generates humor as readily as meaning.