

# Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release

## Quietly Loud

Cassie Raihl, Natasha Conway and Alisha Kerlin

January 6 – February 12, 2011

*Opening Reception: Thursday, January 6, 6-8:30 pm*

Thomas Erben Gallery is pleased to present a three-person show, including paintings by Natasha Conway and Alisha Kerlin as well as sculptures by Cassie Raihl. Although in their late twenties, these artists have already received considerable attention through inclusions in such exhibitions as *4 New Sensations*, Saatchi Gallery London, *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1, and *Knights Move*, Sculpture Center, Long Island City.

Each of the works on display require time and scrutiny to reveal their quiet intelligence and strong determination to capture the poetic capabilities of the artists' chosen media. In this technology driven era, it is easy to forget the role of the handmade object and the importance it plays in a contemporary context. Not overly pretentious or garishly imposing, the artists in this exhibition force the viewer to look beneath what is literally seen to reveal questions about the mediums historical burdens.



Raihl's (b.1983, New York) assemblages of wood, plaster and other common materials as well as objects and paint are tenuously balanced through methods, which are always fully visible. She does not choose to hide the structural workings of her sculptures, but exploits their aesthetic implications. Raihl's ability to juxtapose - creating co-dependent, symbiotic relationships while simultaneously hiding and exposing - results in the construction of the uncanny using familiar objects and materials.



Conway's (b. 1984, Ireland) small-scale paintings display a 'making as thinking' approach. Reminiscent of early cubism, her works hover on the verge of resolve, oscillating between fragile spaces and densely textured painterly surfaces arrived at by a variety of means. While her interest in painting's history is visible, each painting is treated as an open ended exploration. Each functions with its own internal logic yet is firmly rooted in the world of experience, displaying a gentle but insistent emotional undertow. Conway comments: "I think that the slower a painting reveals itself, the more time and attention it requires, the more interesting it is to me".



Kerlin (b. 1981, USA) toys with the notion of the impossible in painting, where symbols overlap and slip choosing such imagery as a game of solitaire or tape measures. Falling short of reaching the viewer as well as touching the suggested vanishing point, the tape measures assign a distance or value to the perceptual space of "here" to "there" and vice versa. Despite the specificity of her imagery, the subject/object relationship is in conflict, existing in a vacuous space, and hinting at a narrative that slips away before it is allowed to form.

Natasha Conway graduated from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, 2009. She was short-listed for the **New Sensations 2009 Prize** organized by the Saatchi Gallery and Channel 4 and was chosen as one of the winners of the **2010 Jerwood Contemporary Painters Prize**, England.

Alisha Kerlin received her BFA in 2005 from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and completed her MFA at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 2008. Kerlin will present a solo project with **Zach Feuer**, New York, June 2011. She recently participated in *Greater New York 2010*, **MoMA PS1**, had a solo exhibition at **Real Fine Arts**, Brooklyn, and, over the past five years, participated in numerous group shows.

Cassie Raihl attained her BFA at The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2006, and her MFA at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 2010. Her most notable recent participations in group shows include *Knights Move*, **Sculpture Center**, and *The Open*, **Deitch Projects**, both Long Island City, NY.

*Gallery hours: Tue-Sat, 10-6. For further information and visuals, please visit [www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com) or contact the gallery at 212-645-8701.*

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