

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**COLEMAN BURKE
GALLERY**

HELEN O'LEARY:
Where things settle

EXHIBITION:
May 12-June 18, 2011

Opening Reception:
Thursday, May 12 | 6-8 pm

New York, NY, April 21, 2011 – Coleman Burke Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new paintings by Irish artist Helen O'Leary. By taking apart wood stretchers, panels, frames, and canvases, she turns the conventions of painting literally inside out. A lover of literature, O'Leary considers this method of working as a form of writing and narrative, recounting “tales of the trade” that speak symmetrically of struggle, loss and lament.

Much of O'Leary's work is influenced by her rural upbringing in Ireland from the 60's through the 80's. It was a life of survival where industriousness and invention born of need were placed on equal footing with rich literature, music, language, and personal narrative. Her lively expressionist paintings don't look like paintings at all. She cuts up wood supports into uneven shapes, unlike the traditional rectangle, and forges openings and windows in them. Paint is then poured and applied with brush, while the canvas itself is rarely seen except for when shredded paintings fill in gaps of the wood. The resulting “cubicles” remind one of a primitive, architectural paper shredder that neatly tears asunder words and hard documents, strewn yet potentially whole. Perhaps it is the perfect analogy to the little short tales O'Leary tells. Her paintings can be both epic and subdued, aggrandizing a cultural history of greatness fallen on hard times while also paying tribute to the quotidian. As her father “worked the land”, so too does the artist “work her studio.” *Where things settle* is labor fraught with stories of defiance, survival, humor, integrity, and harvest.

Helen O'Leary was born in County Wexford, Ireland and studied at the National College of Art and Design (Dublin), Art Institute of Chicago, and Skowhegan School of Painting

and Sculpture. She has exhibited internationally, including the National Gallery of Art, Limerick, Ireland; Glasgow Museum of Art, Scotland; Contemporary Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia; Beverly Art Centre, Chicago; Kerlin Gallery, Dublin; and the Sanskriti Foundation in New Delhi. O'Leary has received numerous honors such as the Pollock-Krasner award (1989, 1996), Joan Mitchell Award (2000), and Cultural Irlandaise and Guggenheim fellowships (2010-2011).

Special Thanks: John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and Penn State University for their generous support.

For more information please contact:

Carrie Mackin,
Director, Coleman Burke Gallery
636 W. 28th St. (btw 11th and 12th Ave) | **best entrance at 11th ave btw 27-28th st.**
New York, NY 10001

Hour of Operation: Tues-Sat 11-6 and by appointment

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Image:

Where things settle

Wood, silver leaf, linen and pigment

20" x 20" x 9"

2011