

For Immediate Release:

New Paintings + New Factories

Meghan Brady

Karen Gelardi

March 4 through April 16, 2010

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 4, 6-8 pm

Gallery Hours: Fridays and Saturdays, 10-6 pm

NEW YORK, NY – Coleman Burke Gallery is pleased to present *New Paintings + New Factories*, a two-person exhibition by artists Meghan Brady and Karen Gelardi. On view from March 4th-April 16th, 2010, this show brings together the work of two artists whose art, each in its own way, synthesizes a do-it-yourself, hand-made ideal with a rigorous, forward-looking aesthetic that is both abstract and socially oriented at the same time.



Meghan Brady, *Brokest* (2010), oil on canvas, 40 x 30 inches

Meghan Brady's paintings are comprised of bold, colorful, and energized geometric patterns inspired by flags, banners, fabric design, and quilts, among various other sources. Unlike most geometric abstraction, which is characteristically flat, reductive and explicit in its pictorial logic, Brady's paintings possess a more idiosyncratic, lyrical, and "lived in" quality that suggests a space and a surface that are in a constant state of flux.

Rather than sub-dividing the rectangle (especially along the standard meridians of its implied grid), the rectangles, triangles, and parallelograms in Brady's paintings seem to jostle one another in an ongoing process of spatial negotiation, like figures adjusting to one another's movements in a crowd, posters accumulating on a construction fence, or ideas shifting from one thought to the next.

As iconic as a flag or a banner, Brady's paintings are meant to catch our eye but beyond that to hold our attention as well, inviting us to experience the nuances, discoveries, and permutations of how they were made, and to contemplate their unpredictable and perpetual state of evolution. Like quilts, which are also a source of inspiration, they draw together snippets of the vernacular world into a kaleidoscopic patchwork of diverse elements to create a new identity (which, also like a quilt, seems to possess a beguilingly awkward, homespun, and "make do" inclusiveness that uses geometric patterning as the matrix to reconstitute their disparate components).

Above all, Meghan Brady is a painter's painter whose eloquent use of her chosen medium is rich in visual metaphors, analogies, and multiple meanings. Her use of white in the paintings is a good example, behaving variously as a presence or an absence, a liquid, a gas, or a solid, the ground of the canvas (apparently untouched) or a white wash that only partially conceals previous decisions. They are paintings that include the viewer's experience in a way that most abstract art does not, reflecting our own complexities and contradictions, memories and aspirations, vulnerabilities and courage, gravity and joy.



Karen Gelardi, *Banner 09* (2009), cotton on linen, nylon thread, 14.75 x 18 inches

Karen Gelardi's collages, fabric assemblages, works on paper, and editioned knitted prints are unique expressions of a common interest in exploring and redefining the traditional boundaries between the natural world, the work of the hand, and more creative and responsible approaches to industrial production. Rooted in her love of drawing from nature, her Shaker-like dedication to simplicity and elegance in the design and small-scale, custom-produced manufacture of everyday objects, and what she admiringly refers to as the “resilience” of natural forms, her art is a playful yet earnest exploration of, testament to, and advocacy for the principle of adaptability.

Based on a drawing made from nature—the bough of a flowering plant, for instance—Gelardi will then put it through its paces, filtering the drawing through various media and production processes to “play out in a visual way,” as she puts it, a model for both aesthetic discovery and a leaner, more efficient use of limited resources. The outcomes of this process—which can be as various as a knitted, 3D “print” (in which she employs a professional knitter to create limited edition artworks, synthesizing and reassigning accepted notions of piece work and traditional printmaking); a large-scale collage of photocopies made on a surface comprised of recycled cereal boxes and other chipboard containers; or appliqués hand-stitched on raw linen (to test the use of this venerable cloth as both a “craft” medium and a “fine art” medium, and to tweak the noses of those who remain hidebound to either camp)—are as delightful to look at as they are inspiring examples of smart, creative ways of seeing production practices evolve in response to our current needs.

Above all, by allowing an image to “ricochet across different media,” to use her description, Karen Gelardi's work is primarily a formal investigation in which the purely visual and sensual aspects of each artwork—its color, form, composition, and materials—are foremost. Hers is also a project, moreover, that invites us to sort through the similarities and differences between her various bodies of work to discover common threads and interconnections, taking this experience one step farther by suggesting the important relationship of artworks to everyday life; not just drawing from it but serving as an example of how aesthetic practices can serve as a model for greater efficiency, adaptability, and creative problem-solving in meeting basic human needs--not least of all our need for beauty.

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