

Andrea Rosen Gallery presents their second exhibition of works by
Katy Moran
May 5 – June 11, 2011



These new works evocatively deepen and expand Moran's exploration of the sensation of painting, and although they remain in their characteristically small format, it is remarkable how the paintings reflect a dynamic push and pull between boundaries that feel at once immeasurable and yet profoundly essential.

We're astounded by just how provocative these new paintings are, in both their attraction and in the mystery of how they are put together, especially in a time in which we think we understand everything there is to know about painting. Each work presents a unique and enigmatic exploration of the vacillation between abstraction and representation. The paintings, so deliberate, descriptive and expressive in each brushstroke, tempt us to try to find a reference, in order to satisfy the urge to assign specific meaning to their intensity. Moran's deeply personal and subjective approach to painting becomes intertwined with our own subjectivity as viewers, leaving us at the loaded cusp of approaching the works intellectually or through pure sensation. The smaller format of the paintings assists this particular and resonant oddness, as formal nuances and gestures proceed and recede from focus as the paintings are viewed from different distances.

Moran's recent practice has included radical approaches and strategies which allow for the slippage of theory in to the intensity, irrationality and violence of letting go. Many of the new works incorporate collage, of found material and even the layering of the canvas itself, creating both beautiful and disruptive nuances of texture and form. By starting a painting with collage, Moran is able to remove the self-conscious first act of making a mark or choosing a color, immediately liberating herself from the demand traditionally associated with the artist's first gesture. In some cases, by starting the collage on large 4 x 5

meter MDF boards and then beginning to paint over top, the expansive scale gives room for the paint to cover and to crop, and even then for the paint itself to be washed away and removed. From this wide angle perspective Moran can zoom in to a particular passage or “sweet spot” of a shape or color that reveals itself as essential to the bigger picture, which can then be excised from its larger context and isolated, or distilled and combined with another work. In one particular painting, “funhilser bay” Moran has cut pieces of the canvas off of one frame and recombined them with another work. The result is at once a strikingly resonant contemporary and yet evanescent image, that through the collage of canvas also engages with the history of distorted form and the constructive brushstrokes of post-impressionist painting.

Moran’s more recent investigations of materiality and appropriation are not relegated to notions of surface, but also to notions of the objecthood or the subversive life of the canvas itself. One work is painted on an old cheese board that Moran found at a charity shop, another work, “circus clown and friend,” on a vintage tray whose edges provide an unexpected frame for the painting. In “bear fun,” it was the back of the found board that provided the perfect slippery surface, akin to oil paint, on which Moran instead applied acrylic and varnish with an expressive and lyrical energy. Punctuating the work are the old eye hooks that playfully and steadfastly remind us that the work we are looking at was once in fact another painting which is now obscured from our view.

As always in Moran’s work, there is a dynamic push and pull between the addition and the removal of paint. In some works the thick application of paint seems to tantalizingly obscure, while in other works, Katy’s removal of the painterly gesture, with rags dipped in varnish or even by sanding, further complicates and deepens our reading of the expression. The tension between the marks made with paint and what Moran reveals or hides with these gestures, and the marks made by the process of the washing of the canvas, letting it dry and then washing it again, or the passages of fabric dipped in varnish which literally and gesturally wipes the paint away, creates a meaningful slippage. There is a dazzling oscillation between what we can learn from the processes of addition and subtraction, what we think and what we sense, and our response to the presence of both.

Katy Moran was born in 1975 in Great Britain. She studied at the Royal College of Art, where she was part of the highly regarded painting MA program. In addition to her 2008 exhibition at Andrea Rosen Gallery, she has had solo exhibitions at Stuart Shave Modern Art in London and Anthony Meier in San Francisco. Moran has been included in group exhibitions at the Tate Britain and Parasol Unit in London, and at the Kunstverein Freiberg in Germany. She had a solo exhibition at the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, England, [Tate St Ives](#), Cornwall, England, and most recently presented "Six Solos, Katy Moran," at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, November 6, 2010 – February 13, 2011.