

Nicola Tyson  
September 8 – November 5, 2011  
Opening reception Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>,  
6-8pm



Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce new paintings and sculptures by Nicola Tyson, September 8 – November 5, 2011.

Nicola Tyson exhibits a group of new large-scale paintings that depict two figures locked in a separate but tense relationship to one another. Each figure is rendered in the artist's chromatically intense palette and commands its space within the canvas frame. The figures are both animated and permanently fixed by the painted surface – a trick that only paintings can readily perform. These figurative characters present strange physical amalgams and morphological complexities that present an anarchic freedom rather than violence, genetic engineering or alienation. Bizarre yet strangely credible, these characters originate from some place in the complex space of the mind, beyond the reassuring confines of reason and the figures are translated into a kind of readable and familiar lexicon of gestures and appendages. The images are often a surprise to the artist herself. The result is playful, disturbing as well as liberating.

Technically, the paintings evolve out of rapid sketches that are scaled up to the size of the canvas. Tyson's taut color decisions and very visceral, yet "dry" paint application are key ingredients in establishing the final painting. Tyson sees herself as operating in relationship to a British satirical tradition extending back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century caricaturists such as James Gillray, who himself identified a national urge towards what he termed "Mock Sublime Mad Taste" – a pushing beyond satire into anarchic freedom, an impulse that was picked up at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Belgium artist James Ensor.

A show of small sculptures at the adjacent gallery space introduces a new area of investigation for Tyson's work. Tyson overcomes the limitations of two-dimensional space as she pops her figures from the flat surface. The small sculptures have the immediacy of a sketch, much like her *Sketch Book Drawings* (last exhibited in 2007 in the same space). Each piece is created rapidly in a fast drying modeling compound but they nevertheless possess a formal weight and complexity,

and intuitive attention to space. The group includes one piece cast subsequently in bronze in complete contrast to the original lightweight modeling compound.

The artist will be staging a repeat reading of her satirical letters to famous artists, during the run of the show (date to be announced). This was first performed at the gallery in May this year.

Nicola Tyson's work is in the collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The Corcoran Gallery of Art at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C; UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Tate Gallery, London. In 2010 she was nominated for the Royal Academy's prestigious Charles Wollaston Award.

The exhibition will open on Thursday, September 8th 2011, with a reception from 6 – 8 p.m., and will remain on view through Saturday, November 5th. Friedrich Petzel Gallery is located at 537 and 535 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011. For further information, please contact the gallery at 212 680 9467 or [info@petzel.com](mailto:info@petzel.com).