

For immediate release

## TOMMA ABTS

October 30 – December 23, 2008

Opening reception: Thursday, October 30, 6 – 8 pm

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David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Tomma Abts. This will be the artist's debut exhibition at the gallery. Earlier this year, the New Museum in New York hosted the artist's first solo presentation at a U.S. museum; the exhibition is currently on view at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (closes November 9<sup>th</sup>). The 2006 recipient of the Turner Prize, Abts has had one-person exhibitions at Kunsthalle Kiel, Kiel, Germany (2006); Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2005); and Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (2005); among others. Her work has been included in major international exhibitions such as the Berlin Biennial (2006) and the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh (2004), as well as a two-person exhibition with Vincent Fecteau at Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands (2004).

Abts makes complex paintings whose subject is ultimately the process of their creation. The artist starts each work without a preconceived composition. Guided largely by intuition, she, nevertheless, works within rigid parameters: all canvases are 48 x 38 cm and vertical. Their evolution is evidenced by ridges and uneven texture—the result of methodical overpainting and reworking of the image.

The obsessively worked paintings display a sharp attention to details of shading and coloration. Without obvious optical device, the artist creates intense illusions, rendering shadows and highlights that challenge any single or realistic light source. The resulting works achieve a paradoxically fractured holism, ultimately conveying balance and movement, while maintaining a sense of uncertainty akin to memory.

As critic Adrian Searle has noted, the intimate works and their "upright rectangular proportions recall domestic portraiture." The titles, drawn from a dictionary of first names, emphasize each painting's individuality and impart a sense of history, albeit unknown, to the canvases. Despite some connections, Abts' works ultimately do not fit into any movement or recognizable historical moment. Furthermore, the artist is distinctly uninterested in a dialogue about abstraction or the history of abstraction in her work; in contrast Abts has expressed a desire to transcend the past or present and point to an "art of the future."

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