

EDWARD THORP GALLERY
Press Release

Clare Grill-Judy Simonian
New Work

January 14- February 19, 2011

Opening reception: Friday, January 14, 6-8 p.m.

Edward Thorp Gallery is pleased to announce two solo shows of new paintings from Clare Grill and Judy Simonian. This show will mark their second appearance here at the gallery having been previously included in the group exhibit "Talk Show".

While each artist manifests a highly personal approach and vision to painting, Clare Grill and Judy Simonian share a tangible investment in technique and a perceptive dialogue with paintings history. The artists' atmospheric works of landscapes and interiors are redolent with nostalgia and memory without ever sinking into sentimentality. Each artist skillfully manipulates the materiality of her medium, imbuing her work with intellect and emotion.

Clare Grill makes paintings that are many things – beautiful, poignant, mysterious and skillfully crafted. They portray private situations in which human figures appear to be engaged in simple everyday activities surrounded by common place objects such as cakes, flowers, fruit, shoes and curtains. Although no literal narrative exists between Grill's paintings in this exhibition, a shared atmosphere prevails. Time seemingly stands still in these episodes as the figures take on a still life-like quality as if they have been subjected to a force greater than themselves. Yet, the deeper we go into Grill's dialogue of the everyday, the more increasingly aware we become of the combination of references that the artist draws from, including her own family history. And unpredictably, her reinterpreted world becomes all the more enigmatic.

Judy Simonian's compositions are hallucinatory renditions of landscapes that defy all spatial logic. The artist's unpredictable and complex works remove the realms of distinction between internal and external space. Locales invariably mutate, merge or collide, and what should be clearly defined becomes fluid. Hers is a process of accumulation where surfaces are built of layered imagery in a complex combination of gestural painting and stenciling and collage. She builds her settings layer upon layer, each added element further pushing the boundaries of perceived space. Thin layers of oil paint ripple with the translucence of water, thereby creating an atmosphere of corrosion and corruption. Simonian's rich surfaces contrast geometric fields of hard-edged abstraction with highly rendered details to create an uncanny play between flatness and three dimensionality.