

Graham Anderson/Caitlin Keogh and Alisa Baremboym/Thomas Torres Cordova

179 Canal, New York
12 March – 4 April

For one of the two collaborative projects at 179 Canal, Thomas Torres Cordova and Alisa Baremboym have configured a conversation that hinges on turning the volume of structuralism up and down. Torres's work is the most married to this approach. His iterations of glass are weighted with inflections of the body as both passive and active agent in relation to a material that is rife with contradictions. On a shattered safety windshield leaning on the wall, he has sandblasted, at eye-level, a pale single-point-perspective image of assembly-line labour; one has to move about the piece to make out the image, and what registers with visceral force are the spider-web breaks across the surface of the piece. The ultimate effect is one of push-and-pull between the beauty of the material and imagery, and the implied trauma of impact.

Elsewhere a short video loops on a tall pane of glass held obliquely in place by the floor and ceiling of the gallery. In the video, weathered hands gently assemble the balsawood components of a model plane; one has to sit on the floor to get the best view. In both pieces, the bodies of the subjects depicted, as well as the viewers' own, are implicated in narratives that are intertwined with those of science and industry as well as labour and instrumentality.

Baremboym has set up and photographed slightly stiff and shrouded anthropomorphic figures cloaked in textiles that gesture towards the Slavic style of her Russian heritage, though they could equally allude to Middle Eastern garb. Startlingly, the visages have been left blank and gaping black. Baremboym floats the photographs inside fabric whose pattern constitutes a repeat of her centralised image. Through these formal as well as conceptual framing devices, Baremboym pins a group of cultural references together, flattening them into a shallow pile so that cultural relativity is extruded and we are subtly muscled into considering our own specific relationship to these signifiers around which she plots her narrative points.

Working as a team, Caitlin Keogh and Graham Anderson have dispersed in their half of the gallery a series of props that cultivate a dialogue between design objects and the environment in which they exist. Modelling their practice after such workshops as the Bauhaus and the Weiner Werkstatte, Anderson and Keogh have created such items as screens, a painted mirror and a pillow plopped in a corner of the gallery. The best passages in their work are the most abstract and the ones that loosen the relationship between form and content, most notably *Splash Curtains* (2010), a set of gauzy drapes sprinkled with slightly goofy biomorphic blobs rendered in marker. All of the works exhibit a lo-fi-ness that at once refreshes and amplifies what is clearly a collective consideration of aesthetic and cultural speeds. *T.J. Carlin*



Caitlin Keogh and Graham Anderson, *Patterned Screen*,
2010, wood, MDF, acrylic paint, oil paint, 218 x 198 cm