

## Kay Ruane

### Room with a View

The Project Room

October 23 - November 25, 2008

#### Jenkins Johnson Gallery

521 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Floor 5

New York, NY 10001

212.629.0707

[ny@jenkinsjohnsongallery.com](mailto:ny@jenkinsjohnsongallery.com)

[jenkinsjohnsongallery.com](http://jenkinsjohnsongallery.com)

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday

10am - 6pm



*Empress, 2008. Graphite and gouache on paper, 11 x 17 inches*

Jenkins Johnson Gallery is pleased to present *Room with a View*, a solo exhibition of new works by Kay Ruane. They will be on view in the Project Room at Jenkins Johnson Gallery in New York from October 23 through November 25, 2008. There will be a reception for the artist held on Thursday, October 23 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

There is something inherently dramatic in the conflict of a figure at a window, watching the world outside, while existing in a different world inside. Kay Ruane's new drawings in *Room with a View* embrace and enhance this conflict, giving the viewer a group of tiny graphite worlds in which Ruane's distinctive and highly crafted style is enhanced by a subtle dose of humor and sexuality. The work lures the viewer into a richly appointed, vaguely familiar room only to suddenly invade this tranquility by juxtaposing it with a sense of doom and disaster as inflicted by the scene outside the window.

*Physics* seems to present a scene of a woman enjoying an afternoon cocktail while looking out the window, until one notices the plane crashing outside, presenting an uncomfortable contrast: how can she rest so serenely while observing the tragedy outside? Similarly, *Empress* shows the figure contemplating a pagoda while a helicopter flies over it to douse the unseen flames threatening to envelope it like a forest fire. Each drawing also manifests a theme in its treatment of details, with exacting and microscopic attention paid to specifics, like the title of a book thrown carelessly on a table or an anonymous painting on the wall. These themes sometimes explore another aspect of detachment, one related to a cultural disconnection between the figure and the minutiae of her space. The detailed objects inside evoke a sense of longing in the figure, who seems to want to be part of a different physical reality and the culture it embodies, while at the same time, she is unwilling to leave the safety of her interior world in order to experience that other world outside the window.

As with the meticulous painters of the Northern Renaissance, Ruane's drawings are crafted with the utmost precision and care; she offers a world in which even a small detail, like the trophy on the wall in *Hound*, could stand alone as a piece of art itself. Similar to painters like Van Eyck, Ruane spends an extensive amount of time perfecting every detail of each piece; a single drawing often requires building up as many as seven layers of graphite, with each pass adding more detail and tonal range in order for her to create an end result that is precisely perfected and flawless.

We are pleased to be able to invite you to her first solo show in New York.

Ruane has been featured in exhibitions throughout the United States and has received grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, the McKnight and Jerome Foundations, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts in 1997. Her work is held by museums and corporate collections nationwide, including AT&T, the Federal Reserve, and Fidelity Investments, among others.

Ruane's formal education includes a BFA from the University of Illinois and studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, though her informal arts education started far earlier. When her mother would give her old greeting cards to entertain her while she was in her crib. Ruane spent hours examining them, eventually copying their motifs. She also developed an early fascination with anatomy and the figure while pouring over her father's medical texts.