

*Press Release*

## **RAHA RAISSNIA**

### **Epitaphios**

Paintings, Works on Paper, and Painted Films

April 22 – June 5, 2004

Reception: Thursday, April 22, 6 – 8:30 with a film performance with musical works by Briggan Krauss at 8:00

#### *Additional Performances*

*Thursday, May 13 - Saturday, May 15, 7:00*

*Thursday, June 3 - Saturday, June 5, 7:00*

Thomas Erben is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of Raha Raissnia (born 1968 in Teheran, Iran). On view will be large monochromatic oil paintings, pencil drawings, as well as hand painted celluloid strips which the artist projects in live performances accompanied by Briggan Krauss, a noted experimental electronic music composer.

Raissnia physically engages the surface of all of her abstract works. Each image emerges as a kind of performance of applying paint, rubbing, erasing, sanding and reapplication until the moment of completion. The final work exists as a result of its own history, resonating with the memory of each mark.

In both media, drawings as well as paintings, linear segments or surfaces are built through accumulation. Together these elements form within their layering an illusion of architectural dimensionality which never denies its inherent flatness; at the same time a biomorphic quality is acquired through partial erasure, bleeding and multiple applications. The resulting images present abstract forms merging with a visceral landscape, simultaneously appearing to be drawn from such traditions as Islamic ornamentation or the Ecole de Paris and a futuristic, space-age biomorphism. There is a naturalistic quality of light that creates an immediate connection to this as a world we know but yet have never experienced before.

In an extension of her practice, the artist applies similar processes on celluloid. By collaborating with musicians and utilizing a prepared projector as a visual instrument to manipulate motion and focus, she further intensifies the experience of the audience. Through this, she relaxes our impulse for a historically conditioned static viewing of her abstract work and engages a revitalized appreciation of the genre.

Raissnia emigrated to the United States in 1983. She received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1992 and her MFA from Pratt Institute in 2002. In between receiving her degrees, her interest in avant garde film making led her to take on an internship at Anthology Film Archives (1995-99) where she also occasionally exhibited. Coming October, she has a solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Isfahan, Iran.

Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10-6

For information and visuals, please visit us at [www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com) or contact the gallery at 212-645-8701.