

Erica Baum – “Play”

September 2 – September 27, 2003

Opening reception: Saturday, September 6, 6 to 8pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

D’Amelio Terras is pleased to present “Play”, the second solo exhibition of New York artist Erica Baum with the gallery. “Play” is a two-part project. A group of black and white photographs of the backs of paper doll figures will be exhibited at D’Amelio Terras while a group of color digital c-prints of stage directions from scripts (the information provided to the actors but not spoken during a performance) will be concurrently on view at the Dance Theater Workshop gallery, located at 219 W. 19th Street.

Baum, who graduated from Yale in 1994, has long been interested in words as visual and imaginary objects. In previous bodies of work, she has used found texts to create photographic works of poetry and fiction. She has explored classification systems such as card catalogues, indices in books, and archival art reference notes. “Play” moves away from text-based art, while still directing her lens towards her favorite subject, the pages of books and the rich magnified texture of paper, which represent for her the dual nature of language, symbolic and physical at once.

In “Play” Baum explores the narrative potential of second-hand paper doll figures, treated as blank players in an imaginary performance. The 30x40 inch black and white photographs depict the reverse side of cardboard cut-out paper doll figures, some undetached and others already perforated. Stripped of their clothing and facial expression, the viewer is left only with outlines of each figure to construct a narrative. The ominous tones of these silver gelatin prints lend each work a patina of unrest and suspicion, suggesting an undercurrent of dark emotion. The exhibition itself becomes a theater with figures on the verge of enacting multiple possible performances. Baum remarks: “Viewers become members of an audience, and the space between the realized and unrealized dramatic unfoldings becomes both a play and a conceptual intermission.”

With this series of ambitious yet modestly-produced work, Baum demonstrates that her sense of linguistic play is subtler than most text-based art. Without being didactic, Baum personifies the ideal reader/viewer-as-author described by Roland Barthes as she invites us to actively take part in creating meaning out of distilled information. The removal of unnecessary props, in stark contrast to so much staged photography produced in recent years, shows that photography can still be the form of expression of conceptual practice.

For press and visuals requests, please contact Brian Sholis at 212-352-9460 or brian@damelioterras.com. You may also contact Liz Sargent at the DTW: 212-691-6500 x 255 or liz@dtw.org

Concurrent solo exhibition at the Dance Theater Workshop gallery, 219 W. 19th St , from September 2 – October 12, 2003. Hours: 10am to 9pm, closed Sundays.

Next exhibition: Joanne Greenbaum October 4 – November 1, 2003

D’Amelio Terras represents Polly Apfelbaum, Erica Baum, Delia Brown, Tony Feher, Joanne Greenbaum, Glenn Ligon, John Morris, Rei Naito, Rika Noguchi, Damián Ortega, Cornelia Parker, Miguel Rio Branco, Karin Sander and Yoshihiro Suda.