

Nancy de Holl
Nancy de Holl and Esther Kläs at Bureau
Artforum.com
March 22, 2011

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[Nancy de Holl and Esther Kläs](#)

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Nancy de Holl, *Lunacy Knot*, 2011, oil on canvas, 30 x 24".

Any artist showing at Bureau, perhaps Manhattan's tiniest exhibition space, must be acutely conscious of how his or her work relates to its immediate surroundings. Fortunately, dealer [Gabrielle Giattino](#) understands this need thoroughly, and selects her collaborators accordingly. [Nancy de Holl](#) and [Esther Kläs](#) share an interest not only in their work's internal dynamics but also in its references to and interactions with a range of settings and contexts. Kläs's

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construction *Hi!*, 2010, for example, plays with the conventions of framing and mounting, deliberately confusing presentational mechanism with that which is being presented, work with “non-work.” And her *Untitled (Come away with me)*, 2009, establishes a comparable tension within a freestanding sculpture, effectively blurring the boundaries between the natural (or at least faux natural) and the designed, the monumental and the domestic.

De Holl concentrates on the image, specifically the still life. In two color photographs, *Peoples and Cultures: Copper Ingot, Asia Minor, 1200 B.C.* and *Peoples and Cultures: Figures, Unknown*, both 2006, she presents and appears to contextualize the titular artifacts. But both the objects and their museological settings turn out to have been constructed from whole cloth, then mixed and matched as a case study in the bleeding of fiction into fact. A single painting by de Holl, *Lunacy Knot*, 2011, sees her move away from manipulating signifiers of historicization and toward a poetic experiment with form and pattern, the illusionistic space of representation and its psychological undertow. A hat, hovering in front of a patterned wall, tops the shadow of an unseen head: our own?

— [Michael Wilson](#)