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PAMELA TALESE

RUST NEVER SLEEPS: *Corrosion and Renewal in Maritime/Industrial New York*
October 6th – 30th, 2009

An exhibition of recent *plein-air* paintings by Pamela Talese will be on view at Atlantic Gallery from October 6th to 30th. In her fourth exhibition at the gallery Talese investigates Industrial New York, which has been in decline since the late 1960's. The opening reception will be held on Tuesday, October 6th from 6pm to 8pm.

The focus of **RUST NEVER SLEEPS** is the vessels, factories and public buildings in and around the Brooklyn Navy Yard where Talese has been painting on location since 2005. The painter is attracted to what is well made, “functional forms,” to quote Lewis Mumford “with a certain cleanness of line and rightness of shape that spring, like the shape of a gull or a hawk, from the work to be performed.” The buildings and ships that interest Talese are older, and represent the once sustainable economies of manufacturing, maritime trade, and working-class New York. Such images provide a useful counterpoint to the theory that America has ‘evolved’ into a knowledge- based economy.

Roberta Smith, writing in *The New York Times*, said about Talese’s previous show **WORKING WATERFRONT** (2005): “The subjects have all seen better days, but the images are not nostalgic. And despite the paintings’ documentary aspect they clearly could not be photographs; they record places of honest work in part by exemplifying it. They are carried by an unforced accuracy abetted by a subtle color sense and straightforward surfaces that are neither finicky nor juiced up.”

Lee Gruzen, author and co-founder *SeaportSpeaks*, describes Talese’s boats and marine buildings as “charged — alive in force-fields of history and nature, engineering and honest labor. The color, texture, and juiciest of light, absorb Talese. They fit her huge appetite for things bold and purposeful, uniquely beautiful, and more alive because of time and the human touch having shaped them.”

As Jessica DuLong, author of *My River Chronicles: Rediscovering America on the Hudson* explains, “Talese’s paintings breathe with the collected hours she spends toiling alongside workers in all kinds of weather. Their hands—the workers’ and the painter’s—are the protagonists in the narrative, though they exist outside the frame of the finished painting, the record of renewal and repair.”

When painting industrial structures, rust is a color on the pallet. Each new layer of paint, like the rust observed by marine surveyor A. Campbell Holmes in his 1918 text *Practical Shipbuilding* “adheres to the last, and in course of time they form together a thick, brittle, slate-like mass.”

Talese paints slowly, returning to the scene of inquiry during several weeks. Depictions of ships in the Navy Yard during various stages of rust, repair and readiness suggest that corrosion and renewal can be opposite sides of the same coin.

Gallery Hours Tuesday-Saturday 12 noon-6pm