



## **Holly Coulis**

March 3 – April 28, 2012

**February 2012, Los Angeles—Cherry and Martin is pleased to announce an exhibition of new, monumental paintings by the New York-based Holly Coulis.**

The exhibition opens March 3 and continues through April 28. The opening is Saturday, March 3 from 6-8pm.

In a collection of new paintings, Holly Coulis presents large-scale still-lives and landscapes in broad and subtle color. She cleverly employs the simplicity of traditional genres as a framework for a complex exploration of the language of painting. The work is simultaneously cerebral and emotional, playfully raising questions about our relationship to images while finding poignant tensions in an idiosyncratic sense of color, line, and material. Colors range from vibrant to murky, paint marks from elegant to gritty, and space from harmonious to awkward; the work embodies an unexpected sense of beauty that encompasses much more than visual affect. In both theme and execution, the levity of her work is always in play with a darker, more serious subtext.

In “Pink Flowers, Red Vase,” the vase appears on the verge of every so gracefully tipping off the back edge of the table. While the under-painting serves to designate foreground from

background, vase from table, the application of subsequent, vibrant layers of complimentary colors works to flatten that space and suspend our belief in the cast shadows. This peculiar push-pull is not uncommon in Coulis' paintings, which draw upon a mix of influences as varied as cartoons, French painting and Pop. Similarly, the scale possesses both a stark monumentality and playful intimacy; an effect that is heightened by Coulis' simplified edges and flattened shapes drawn, in part, from the smaller sketches that are her sources.

Coulis' simplified landscapes are painted in muted olive and gray tones and function as empty, abstract spaces; a knowing but reverent play with the promised transcendence of both painting and landscape. "Fog" is unidentifiable as any real place but is nonetheless believable as a landscape – simultaneously anywhere and nowhere. Cabbages and peppers take on anthropomorphic qualities, and the impending death of picked flowers is rendered cheerful by her application of loud but considered color. In both style and substance, her work feels distantly related to that of David Hockney, Sylvia Sleigh, Jane Freilicher, and even Freida Kahlo. Emotional, poetic, light-hearted but with serious intent, Coulis turns genre painting on its ear.

Holly Coulis received her BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design and her MFA from the Boston Museum School. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions in the United States and Europe. She has had solo exhibitions at Cherry and Martin (Los Angeles), Groeflin Maag Galerie (Zurich, Switzerland), Lamontagne Gallery (Boston) and Zach Feuer/LFL Gallery (New York City).