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## KATIE BELL Light Weight

February 13 – March 15, 2014 Opening: Thursday, February 13, 6-8pm

Mixed Greens is thrilled to present Katie Bell's first solo exhibition in New York. A self-proclaimed "home-maker" and "home-wrecker," Bell repurposes building materials and elements of interior design to make sculptural paintings that challenge familiar spaces, gendered dichotomies, and the history of painting.

Using everything from insulation foam to window blinds, shelf paper, laminate, carpets, and a discarded Jacuzzi, Bell mines the components used to build our living quarters and then complicates them through the language of painting. She questions the history of the objects, their purpose, and their context. Color, line, and texture are inherent in the materials themselves, and Bell accentuates those traits (by way of power tools and heavy lifting) to form manic, exploding compositions that teeter on walls and rupture into the viewer's space. However, Bell controls the composition with simple gestures such as the judicious use of a piece rope or a simple, painted line.

In all of Bell's works—whether large-scale, site-specific installations; smaller, self-contained paintings; or painting-like objects leaning uncomfortably on shelves—ideas related to excavation, construction, and mutation prevail. Her studio is a test site where she can combine, dismantle, and recombine her never-ending supply of ingredients. She debunks the viewer's assumptions about the familiar raw materials as she plays with balance, weight, and motion. Shards of construction materials appear to defy gravity. Pieces of wood and layers of paint are static, but rarely appear so. Drips, splatters, taught rope, and expanding foam, all appear at a standstill but for a moment—as if each piece is holding its breath until the viewer leaves.

Light Weight refers to Bell's boxing-like relationship with her unruly materials and her constant struggle in the studio that goes beyond the physical. While many of her pieces have been sawed, tied, and assaulted in a number of ways, there is also a delicacy that requires a light touch and careful maneuvering. As Bell collects materials, she is combining items that want to be together and others that need to be coerced. The title, and her process, signal Bell's conscious complication of gendered dichotomies—such as light and heavy, weak and strong, soft and hard—and her sense of humor while tackling such heavy subjects.

KATIE BELL grew up in Rockford, IL, and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received her MFA in Painting from Rhode Island School of Design in 2011. Her work has been exhibited in numerous group shows since then, including ones at Mixed Greens, New York, NY; the Rockford Art Museum, Rockford, IL; Nudashank Gallery, Baltimore, MD; Delicious Spectacle, Washington, DC; Storefront Ten Eyck, Brooklyn, NY; and FJORD Gallery, Philadelphia, PA. She has also had several solo exhibitions at venues such as BOX Gallery, Galesburg, IL; Okay Mountain Gallery, Austin, TX; Backspace, Peoria, IL; and the John C. Hutcheson Gallery, Nashville, TN. She has been a visiting artist at the University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury, UK; Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; and the University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS. In 2012, she received space at the highly competitive Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation studio program in Brooklyn. Concurrent to this exhibition, her work will be on view at the Brooklyn Academy