

The Noyes Museum of Art of Richard Stockton College  
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**Flashpoint: *Tom Birkner and Alyssa Monks***

**Exhibition Dates:** June 11 - September 15, 2010

**Summer Opening Reception** - Friday, June 18, 2010

OCEANVILLE – The paintings of Alyssa Monks and Tom Birkner are of a representational narrative genre, luring the viewer to a specific time, place and action. Both artists present meticulously painted oils that tell a story, not quite explicit. Here figures are caught in the moment, engaging the viewer to ask, “What happens next?” Never still, figures provide engaging narratives in a full range of human emotion.

Tom Birkner takes a closer look at the social landscapes that surround us with an honest and straightforward eye. Scenes of blue-collar New Jersey towns, abandoned warehouses, people hanging out in the neighborhood or at the local race track are both beautiful and haunting. The environment is gritty, familiar, and surprisingly close to home. Birkner is interested in the stories of the people he paints and the characters have a familiar quality. He sometimes focuses on one hue in a painting, adding to the cinematic quality of his work. In *Heavy Metal*, a girl lights a cigarette, as Soprano-style thugs in the background make a plan in the parking lot behind her.

Birkner grew up in Rahway, New Jersey, and currently lives and works in Lambertville, New Jersey. He received his BA from Rutgers and his MFA from Penn State. He has twice received the NJ State Council on the Arts Fellowship. Birkner has exhibited extensively, including numerous solo exhibitions at DFN Gallery, as well as in Chicago, San Francisco, Milan, Bologna, and Beijing.

At first glance, Alyssa Monks’ images appear to be hyper-realist renderings. Viewed at a closer distance, however, they are something all together different and even more interesting. She uses the paint in a loose painterly manner, so that when you move close to her paintings they become very abstract, breaking down into strokes and dabs of color. Striving for anatomical accuracy Monks captures the figure in a specific time and place. Her technically accurate representation is remarkable as she presents water surfaces, glass and flesh with alarming realism. Monks explains, “I want to see how far I can push the image out of clear focus and still have it be convincing and realistic.”

Raised in New Jersey, Monks earned her MFA in painting from the New York Academy of Art, Graduate School of Figurative Art. Monks is part of the Continuing Education Faculty at the New York Academy of Art, where she teaches Flesh Painting. She currently is also an instructor at the Montclair State University. Alyssa has had numerous solo shows in New York and Anaheim, California and has exhibited internationally in Germany and Italy.

*The Noyes Museum of Art- The Noyes Museum of Art was founded in 1983 to collect, preserve and exhibit American fine art, crafts and folk art. An emphasis is on New Jersey artists and folk art forms, reflecting the area's long history, traditions, landscape and culture. General funding is provided by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Arts; the Mr. and Mrs. Fred Winslow Noyes Foundation; The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey; the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; the Odessa F. and Henry D. Kahrs Charitable Trust. Please call 609-652-8848 or visit our website for more information.*

Images Attached: 1) Alyssa Monks, *Raw* 2) Tom Birkner, *Heavy Metal*

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