



ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE ◦ 511 WEST 25TH STREET, NYC ◦ 212.255.6651 ◦
WWW.AIRGALLERY.ORG

Anita Ragusa *New Work* May 27 – June 21, 2008
Opening Reception, Thursday May 29, 6pm – 8pm

NEW YORK, NY. March 2008 – A. I. R. Gallery is pleased to present **Anita Ragusa, *New Works***, a solo exhibition of paintings by 2007-2008 A.I.R. Fellowship Recipient. The exhibition is on view from April 1 – 26 with an opening reception Thursday, May 29 from 6-8 PM.

Ragusa’s lush, vibrant oil paintings are both nostalgic and new. For her visual vocabulary the artist draws from the architecture, fashion and furnishings of her childhood in Sarajevo - chandeliers, elaborate custom made jewelry, exotic feathers, ornate furniture, and vintage textile designs. Layered on her personal history are fantasy and delicate detail from Ragusa’s literary influences of the Symbolist and decadent aesthetic such as Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *A Rebours* by J. K. Hysmans. Descriptive passages from each of these texts inform the artist’s lavish modern day *veritas*. “Small, and jewel-like, Ragusa’s loosely rendered paintings are reminiscent of Elizabeth Payton in their use of rich colors and treatment of the surface. Romantic and nostalgic in the best sense, Anita creates wonderfully self-contained worlds within her work that still manage to have a dialogue with the contemporary discourse of painting” (Jaishri Abichandani, *Queens Museum of Art*).

The imagery in this exhibition follows logically from Ragusa’s earlier series that are populated by glamorous, lavishly dressed ladies and handsome, languid young men. Constant are her baroque interiors and decorative, often floral motifs. In the artist’s new work she plays with a different, slightly darker palate and adds more depth to her former intentionally flatter fields of color. A refreshing and unique willingness to play with a variety of styles in accordance with her subjects already marks Ragusa’s career. The critic Sharon Mizota has written that the artist’s “two bodies of work disrupts the notion of a signature style. Most intriguingly, she uses this gap to comment on representations of gender.”

Anita Ragusa was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and lives and works in New York City. She received her BFA from The Cooper Union School of Fine Art. Ragusa has exhibited her work at A.I.R. Gallery, Art About Us and at The Queens Museum of Art in the Queens International 2006, *Everything all at Once*.

A.I.R. Gallery is located at 511 West 25th Street, NYC.
Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday 11am-6pm.

Contact: Kat Griefen, Director, A.I.R. Gallery
212.255.6651 or kgriefen@airgallery.org



The A.I.R. Fellowship Program is made possible by generous support from organizations including:

