

Trisha Donnelly

CASEY KAPLAN
525 West 21st Street
May 11–June 14



HW, 2007, embroidered cotton and steel in two parts, each 140 x 43 1/2 x 3".

Close your eyes for a moment while visiting Trisha Donnelly's third solo exhibition at this gallery. A pile of pine branches in the first room and the sound of bells ringing intermittently in the second might provide just enough stimulus to trigger a memory—perhaps of the holiday season, a vacation, or something not typically associated with art. Much of Donnelly's work operates metaphorically, as if to forge suggestive links between her practice and larger, sometimes otherworldly ideas. Subtle connections between fiction and fact abound in this show, like tiny seeds planted in the back of our minds that bloom later on. Consider, for example, *R. Creeley + Levitating Wave* (all works 2007), a delicate drawing on fabric that references the American poet and an imaginary oceanic event. Other works connect sound and space with a dramatic touch: *HW*, an embroidered cotton and steel sculpture depicting sound waves and pressure, is draped like a theater curtain at the entrance of the gallery. A series of sculptures on wheels, all entitled *Braker*, are embroidered with a quasi-phallic shape and placed randomly throughout the gallery, helping to split up, shift, and symbolically bookend the other artworks on view. If Donnelly's earlier work examined artists' ability to create, sustain, and shape myths (notably channeling Napoleon's surrender during a 2002 performance), this exhibition forsakes narrative momentum for a precarious standoff between chaos and calculation. This is, as is always the case with her work, a risky proposition, but Donnelly pulls it off with free-floating associations and magical thinking.

—Lauren O'Neill-Butler