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For Immediate Release:

Cathleen Cohen *Affinities*

April 1 – 26, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday April 3, 6 -8pm



Two Brides, 2013, Watercolor and graphite

Affinities, an exhibition of recent watercolor portraits by Cathleen Cohen, illustrates an intimate collaboration between artist and sitter. Cohen relishes in the timeless delight of documenting our lives and the lives of those closest to us. This body of work is also a reaction to that primal human urge to stand outside of our selves in order to look within. Her subjects are close friends and families, characters whose idiosyncratic strivings inevitably trickle into her subconscious, yielding reciprocal reverberations.

Cohen's portraits compose a visual diary salted with unions, curiosities, wisdom and revelations. The series started with the women in her family, taking on the complexion of a carefully charted genealogical study. Tracing an oft-coded narrative of emotional perceptivity and instinctual insight, she detects her granddaughter's sense of determination in a portrait of her grandmother, her dignified carriage, lengths of her fingers, the way she maneuvers her wrist.

The medium allows Cohen to dance her paintings: there is a quality of lightness, optimism and spontaneity that pulses throughout her work. Watercolor is fleeting and immediate, demanding that she remain attentive as edges, washes and colors blur. In its unforgiving nature, the exhilaration of swift connectedness sees the portrait become more of a moment, or a glimpse mid-story, rather than a fleshed out likeness. Cohen also incorporates language into her process, considering the possibilities inherent in the relationship between visual materiality and poetic structure. Working with poetry allows her to move freely between the weight of surface and experience, navigating between paint, sound, form and construct.

A painter and poet living outside of Philadelphia, Cathleen teaches these art forms to students from diverse cultures and communities through ArtWell, where she is the Education Director. She received a certificate from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1997 and a doctorate in Learning Disabilities from Northwestern University in 1981. Cathleen has published poetry and articles in and has shown paintings at the Rosenfeld Gallery in Philadelphia; Morpeth Gallery in Hopewell, NJ; and RiverArts Gallery in Stockton, NJ, among others.

For more information please contact the gallery at 212-367-8994 or info@soho20gallery.com