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*Surface Tension*, a show of new works by artists Kasia Bytnerowicz and Elizabeth Hathaway will be on view at the Atlantic Works Gallery at 80 Border St. in East Boston from April 4 to April 29, 2005. There will be a reception on April 8th from 7 to 9 p.m., and a potluck Third Thursday celebration on April 21, from 7 to 9 pm. In *Surface Tension*, both artists manipulate surfaces of canvas and paper to transcend the two-dimensional plane of painting.

Elizabeth Hathaway's acrylic paintings, such as *Sedimentation*, are a reflection of the tension between the subconscious and the conscious mind. Each painting is an accumulation of layers of varying texture, painted with different random patterns. In some instances the strata are sanded down to reveal rich veins of cadmium red and yellow through warm and cool blacks. The interaction of forms across the layers evokes the recurring but ever unique motifs of nature and of human social interaction.

Hathaway's other canvases explode with cocoon-like forms which protrude from the two-dimensional surface. In places the canvas is cut away and wire woven through to form armatures for cocoons of handmade Japanese paper toned with beeswax. They look like the pupae of some fantastic species of insect which chose the canvas for its metamorphosis. In one corner of the gallery, these cocoons spiral downward from a central point, creating a space where the viewers are encouraged to delve into their subconscious.

In her *Threadbare* series, Kasia Bytnerowicz explores the intrinsic qualities of the linen canvas, relegating paint to a supporting role. Some paintings depict white linen shirts hanging out to dry. They are drapery studies without a body, though a trace of the human form remains in the structure of the clothing. In others, the human form is covered with a white sheet, its shape barely discernible within the folds. Only white paint was used, suggesting underpainting. The canvas was not primed so it could be appreciated in its raw form. To emphasize the texture of the weave, the artist removed some threads from the woof and pulled others into an undulating pattern. She also embroidered the canvas to suggest buttons on the shirts. Traditional aspects of "women's work"—weaving, laundry, and embroidery—recur throughout the series. The result is a symphony in negative space and an intimate study of the very fabric of a painting.