

# ROBERTS & TILTON

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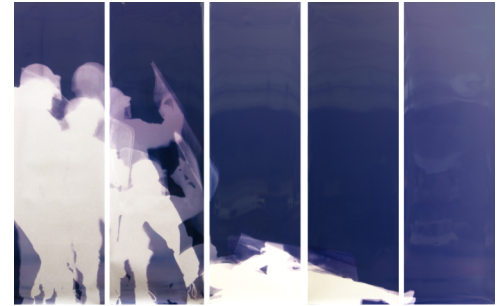
## Farrah Karapetian

### *Representation<sup>3</sup>*

Co-Organized by Justin Gilanyi

April 14 – May 26, 2012

Opening Reception Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 6 to 8pm



Farrah Karapetian *Riot Police*, 2011  
Unique chromogenic photograms from performance  
Five prints, 8 x 13 feet total

**Representation<sup>3</sup>**, Farrah Karapetian's first comprehensive exhibition and her first show with Roberts & Tilton, examines representation in both political and artistic terms. For Karapetian, these forms of representation are inseparable from abstract processes, particularly contemporary forms of media and their effects on our perception of material reality. Through four monumental works, Karapetian models a distinct mode of political and artistic address. Each piece is inspired by a specific image culled from the news over the course of 2011; the original representation is then restaged according to the artist's processes of constructing negatives from re-enactments; finally, these sculptural negatives and darkroom performances result in unique photograms, a third stage of representation.

Each piece in the show treats photographic representation from a place of metaphor rather than of documentation and prompts us to consider how diverse representational strategies – pictorial, sculptural, performative, photographic – foster different states of address in a viewing citizen. *Bedroom* (2012), a piece conceived specifically for Roberts & Tilton's Project Room, exhibits Karapetian's tendencies towards three-dimensional intervention and a photography of an architectural scale. *Riot Police* (2011) is a chromogenic photogram created through performance, based on a news image of police being stoned by protesters in Kyrgyzstan. *Hold Your Ground, Egyptian* (2011) is a silver gelatin photogram shown in eight dyads. This piece is based on a flyer distributed in Egypt before the fall of Mubarak, instructing civilians in the mechanics of unrest. The photogram is both an instruction manual and a representation of an instruction manual. In the fifth panel is photogrammed Ahmed Maher, Nobel Prize nominated co-founder of the 6 April Youth Movement, portraying both rioter and riot cop.

The images Karapetian mines reflect moments in our lived history at which overwhelming circumstances place the human character at the heart of a tragi-comic narrative. In the elaborate staging and exhibition of these prints, the artist returns to the position of the photograph as an a-factual object: color, markmaking, and time spent are revealed as the products of both choice and chance here, and the print itself is what one sees first, rather than its subject. The time it takes to expose each print – sometimes doubly or triply – is registered in the image, pushing the work into the conceptual place occupied by motion pictures.

Representation implies and includes abstraction: Karapetian's work, though largely figurative, includes hints as to the codes of its own making and to the ideological codes of the mass-media as well. The pictures reveal iconic representational tendencies in contemporary photography and graphic design, which are employed to describe events with extra-experiential drama and clarity. By working with hyperanalogue processes and at the scale of everyday life, the artist shows us that re-representation offers the possibility of deeper, slower experience of potent moments in our lived history than is afforded by the fleeting jpeg disseminated online.

Farrah Karapetian (b. U.S. 1978) received a BA in fine art from Yale University in 2000 and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2008. Taking the codes and conventions of photography as her point of departure, Karapetian's work frequently responds to moments of social and political crisis as they manifest in urban space. Specifically, the artist's photograms reenact media imagery, but the artist constructs these "striking, memorable" scenes "more like a metaphor than a record" (Leah Ollman, LA Times, 2009) and has been commended for her "succinct delivery of a profound message" (Terri Martin, Glendale News, 2011). A MacDowell Fellow (2010) and an artist-in-residence at the Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War (2009), the artist has had solo shows that include LEADAPRON (2011); Sandroni.Rey, Los Angeles (2009); and the Vincent Price Art Museum, Los Angeles (2012). Karapetian's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including ones held at the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Parc Saint-Léger, France; Superfront, Brooklyn; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Artist Gallery. She lectures frequently at venues such as Art Center College of Design, USC, Otis College of Art and Design, and UCLA, and her writing has appeared in publications such as Architectural Interventions (Laurence King Publishing 2012), Whitehot Magazine, and the Brooklyn Rail.

Justin Gilanyi is a Los Angeles based independent advisor. *Representation<sup>3</sup>* is co-organized by Gilanyi and will include programming that will enforce the educational dialogue within Karapetian's work.

Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11:00am – 6:00pm.

For additional information, please contact Mary Skarbek at mary@robertsandtilton.com or 323.549.0223.