



**Birgit Brenner**  
*Das reicht nicht*  
2011  
Marc Straus Gallery, New York

### **Birgit Brenner**

Marc Straus  
299 Grand Street  
*Jan. 8-Feb. 10, 2012*

Marc Straus, the veteran art collector and oncologist who began his art buying while still paying his way through medical school, already runs the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art up in Peekskill, N.Y. Now he has opened a New York gallery in the heart of Chinatown, transforming a cramped and worn tenement building that his family had owned for years into an airy, high-ceilinged, two-story exhibition space, whose flooring -- centuries-old wood planks that Straus stripped from a barn in Kentucky -- is a definite highlight.

He inaugurates the venture with a show of enormous cardboard collages by the German artist Birgit Brenner (b. 1964). Replete with personal imagery, from domestic interiors to family members to remembered sexual escapades, the works are intimate in content yet grand in scale, some stretching to nearly 8 x 8 ft., and they recall both Rauschenberg's signature assemblages and curated moodboards that Brenner could very well have ripped from the pages of her journal and blown up. After building up a structure with layers of cardboard, she paints, sketches and writes on it by hand, inserting bits of text, like captions, that read as stage directions to her life. Small, individual compositions are priced around \$3,000 while the largest of them go for \$22,000.

Also on view are some angsty, photorealist paintings by Croatian star Zlatan Vebovic (b. 1982). Although he has won a cornucopia of awards (including one from the International Association of Art Critics Award, or AICA) and sells for big money at home, his work has been little seen elsewhere. Straus, who says he knows the value of a collector's dollar, is keeping the works affordable in order to establish a local market. Next up in the space are large sculptures by Chris Jones, opening Feb. 15, 2012: the show is slated to include a life-sized, horse drawn-carriage made entirely out of magazine clippings.

ARTNET January 26 2012

THE NEW YORK LIST

By Emily Nathan