

# pt at large

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## **Triiibe at Gallery Kayafas: A Real Trip(lette)**

TRIIIBE

At: Gallery Kayafas

450 Harrison Ave, Boston, MA

Through May 17, 2010

[www.gallerykayafas.com](http://www.gallerykayafas.com)

Whether you're scratching your head and saying, "Whaaaat?" in amazement or smiling at the fun these people are having, you'll be glad you came to **Gallery Kayafas** to explore the photography show "**Triiibe**."

Those three "i"s in the title refer to identical triplets Alicia, Kelly, and Sara Casilio who love to use their astonishing identicality to mess you up - and they succeed. When they dress the same in "Paint By Number", your eyes dart from one face to the other to the other trying to find a tiny mark, mole, set of lips, anything, that will differentiate one from the others. You wonder - can they possibly be as identical on the inside as they appear on the surface?

In "Compatibility Quiz," another of the 16 gorgeous color photographs in the show, the three don't try to disguise their faces but wear different colored wigs and dress up like a party girl, a librarian, and a hipster, all leaning against a barroom counter. Before you realize it, you assign certain cultural values and assumptions to them based on their appearance. You've fallen right into their clutches.

Whether these chameleons choose to camouflage themselves or confound us with their mirror images, they're not just into trompe l'oeil compositions.

Photographs titled "Right to Life," "Abstinence Eve," "Black and White," "Equal Opportunity," and "Homeland" have a point of view that's more in the form of a thesis than a slogan. These performance artists aren't flamethrowers. They tap you on the shoulder and say, "What's your position on this?"

So when you see "Black and White," a photo of a pregnant woman partially covered by a white sheet being observed by Supreme Court justices, the looks on the siblings' three faces tells the narrative. In "Homeland," a father and mother pose with a photo of a son in military garb in a framed picture on

the wall behind them. White bread America - or not?

Their use of wigs, clothing, and make-up deconstructs their gender and personal identity and adds an insidious voyeuristic aspect to each photograph. Substitute three non-related women for Alicia, Kelly, and Sara and the statement evaporates.

Every photo is a triple take. Are we looking at identical sisters or are we looking at the women and men they're posing as and what's their point? The show produces an interactive ping pong effect in your head as, in spite of yourself, you try to figure out who's who and what they're up to. Their point? They're still themselves as they pose to be others. Aren't we all the same under our own skins, they seem to be asking.

A series of four photographs titled "Shelf-Life" is goofy and playful. Their heads appear disembodied, protruding from holes on a shelf, and for all the world look like alabaster sculptures on display. In "Shelf-Life #4" it looks like they've emptied their prop closet and scattered beads, eyeglasses, wigs, handbags and scarves on and around their heads. "Shelf-Life #1" looks like the shelf after a great sale. Nothing left except their alabaster heads in subtle repose.

The large format photographs nearly step right out of their custom frames. Lush color, precisely detailed, they maximize the photogenic triplet's flesh tones, facial contours and body language. There's a wondrous collaborative relationship between photographer and sisters.

**Cary Wolinsky** really gets what the Casilios are up to. A renowned photojournalist since he began with the Boston Globe in 1968, Cary Wolinsky's photo essays have been published by National Geographic, The Smithsonian, and Natural History magazines. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts and other prestigious institutions have collected his fine art prints. He first saw them as they pulled off a piece of guerilla theater at Massachusetts College of Art (their 2001 alma mater) in 2005. He'd just left his gig at National Geographic. Their stunt was the spark that ignited the formation of their collaborative group "**Triiibe**" in 2006.

*Note the couch, same as one in photo*

This is a family production on both sides of the camera. Cary Wolinsky's son **Yari**, a freelance filmmaker, has made videos of the performance artists in action. They're not part of the show but they demonstrate the triplets power to leverage their identical appearances to make their own political points. Click on page 3 of the Gallery link on **Triiibe**'s website to find his

stunning "Bailouts and Bonuses" video of the sisters on Wall Street. Cary Wolinsky's wife **Babs Emmel** is often called upon for artistic advice and clothing management.

“Their sense of humor is disarming as they engage you with the issues they want to focus on,” gallery owner Arlette Kayafas says. From the concept to the content, this show is a real trip, as in triplet.

*Photos by Paul A.Tamburello, Jr.*