

Press Release

Mai-Thu Perret *Apocalypse Ballet*

January 28 – March 31, 2006

Opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11 a.m - 6 p.m.

Barbara Weiss is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by Mai-Thu Perret. *Apocalypse Ballet* is Mai-Thu Perret's first exhibition in Germany.

Since 1999, Mai-Thu Perret has been writing "The Crystal Frontier", a fictional account of a group of women dissatisfied with city life who go off into the desert and found an autonomous commune. Parallel to the written text, artworks are created and exhibited as the women's hypothetical production. The fiction functions simultaneously as a generative mechanism for the artworks and as a filter coloring their reception and interpretation. Aiming to reform every aspect of social organization and production in their quest for the better life, the works of the Crystal Frontier have included experiments in rabbit breeding and housing, ceramic vessels for a psychedelic tea service, a pottery workshop in self-expression, an unfinished rock musical with stage set and props, a handless pictorial clock, constructivist influenced clothing, abstract paintings and murals, functional and functionless things, as well as a group of monuments to revolutionary womanhood.

Central to *Apocalypse Ballet* is an ensemble of four standing paper mâché mannequins. Motion is suspended and the figures are frozen mid-gesture in what appears to be dance or exercise movements. Three of the mannequins are holding neon circles, while on the last one, the rings have shifted from performance props and become a dress, encircling the figure with light. With *Apocalypse Ballet* the artist continues her exploitation of favorites themes and histories, borrowing from the apparently disparate spaces of avant-garde stage design (Oskar Schlemmer at the Bauhaus in Germany and constructivists such as Rodchenko, Stepanova and Exeter in Russia) and the golden age of Hollywood musicals (neon rings appear as props in Busby Berkeley's musical *The Gang's All Here*), to create an esoteric and abstract tableau. All the clothes included in the exhibition were designed by Ligia Dias, a Paris based fashion designer, in collaboration with the artist.

Mai-Thu Perret was born in 1976 in Geneva, Switzerland and currently lives in Geneva and New York. She studied at Cambridge University, and at the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York.

Exhibitions (selection)

May 2006, The Renaissance Society, Chicago (solo); April 2006, *Solid objects* (with Valentin Carron), Chisenhale Gallery, London; 2005 *Solid Objects* (with Valentin Carron), Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; *Heroine of the People*, Galerie Praz-Delavallade, Paris (solo); *Parallel Life*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt; *Model Modernism*, Artist Space, New York; 2004 *Statements*, Art Basel 35, Basel (solo); *Fürchte Dich*, Helmhaus, Zurich; *Archives generation upon generation*, Year, Brooklyn, NY; 2003 *Pure self-expression x25*, Galerie Francesca Pia, Bern (solo); *Form/Kontext/Troja*, Secession, Vienna.

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