

Press release

May 2007

Mai-Thu Perret Crab Nebula

June 10–July 13, 2007

Opening: Saturday, June 9, 6–8 p.m.

Prior to our summer break, Galerie Francesca Pia is pleased to present new work by the Swiss artist Mai-Thu Perret (Born in Geneva, 1976).

Since 1999, Mai-Thu Perret has been writing her fragmentary text, "Crystal Frontier," depicting in the form of personalized journal entries, letters, etc., life in a women's commune in the desert of New Mexico, which, although modeled after the Utopian projects of the 1960s and 1970s, is removed from time. In addition, objects are created, which the artist describes as "hypothetical products" of the commune, trying to free herself from the subjectivity of authorship. At first predominantly hand-made, these pieces range from ceramics and textiles to paintings, often straddling the divide between utilitarian and fetishistically decorative objects and drawing on the worlds of art, architecture, design, history, and civilizations of the past. By interweaving historical fact and fiction and conflating the lofty ideals of art theory with a down-to-earth DIY aesthetics, Perret creates a screen for the projection of a multi-layered discourse on the object as reflected in its material composition, as well as in its subjective interpretation and projections, historiography and contemporary Utopias.

Starting in 2004, Mai-Thu Perret designed her first mannequins made of papier mâché, drawing inspiration from 1930s fashion, avant-garde stage design (Oskar Schlemmer, German Bauhaus, or Russian Constructivism), and vintage Hollywood musicals. As these mannequins evolve from display objects for textile goods allegedly produced by the commune into independent sculptures, they also lead to a less rigid treatment of the Crystal Frontier texts. Standing in the gallery's back room and appearing almost archetype-like are a mother and her five children dressed in futuristic-looking clothes. They are surrounded by ceramic reliefs harking back to the ceramic objects Mai-Thu Perret presented as imaginary output of the commune's studios in her first show at our gallery, "Pure Self-Expression x25" (2003). In these reliefs, abstract and figurative motifs are interspersed with everyday symbols, art-historical references and instances of self-referentiality. In the first room, the exhibition starts off with wallpaper designed by the artist.

Galerie Francesca Pia, Limmatstraße 275, 8005 Zürich, www.francescapia.com

Next exhibition: Summer Group Show, opening August 24

Current exhibitions of works by Mai-Thu Perret

Centre Culturel Suisse, *Evenement # 1/07, WORKER DRONE QUEEN*, exhibition including Carol Bove, Vidya Gastaldon, Amy O'Neill, and Mai-Thu Perret, Paris, April 15–July 15, 2007

Kunsthalle Exnergasse, *tension, sex, despair – aber hallo/na und*, Wien, April 26–May 26, 2007

Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, *In the Poem about Love You Don't Write Love*, Minneapolis, May 19–July 28, 2007

Aussenraum der Berggemeinde Amden am Walensee, *Mai-Thu Perret: Das Kunstwerk und sein Ort* (curated by Roman Kurzmeyer), Amden, opening Saturday, May 26, 2007, 2:30–5 p.m., May 26–July 8, 2007

Upcoming

Kölnischer Kunstverein, *Pure Self Expression*, June 2–August 12, 2007, Cologne (group show)

Biennale de Lyon

Gulbekian Foundation, Lisbon (group show)

Sonjeart Centre, *Tomorrow*, Seoul (group show)

Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht (one-woman show)

Neue Kunsthalle St. Gallen (one-woman show)

Major recent exhibitions

The Renaissance Society, *And Every Woman Will Be a Walking Synthesis of the Universe*, Chicago, 2006

Chisenhale Gallery, *Solid Objects* (with Valentin Carron), London, 2006

Centre d'Art Contemporain, *Solid Objects* (with Valentin Carron), Geneva, 2006

P.S. 1, *The Gold Standard*, New York 2006

Frankfurter Kunstverein, *Paralleles Leben*, Frankfurt am Main, 2005

Helmhaus, *Fürchte dich*, Zürich, 2004

Kunsthaus Glarus, *Fink Forward the collection*, Glarus, 2003

Monograph: Mai-Thu Perret, Collection Cahiers d'Artistes, Pro Helvetia, Edizioni Periferia, Lucerne/Poschiavo, 2006

Planned monograph: Mai-Thu Perret, Land of Crystal, JRP Ringier, Zürich