

Sarah Morris
General Control
October 23rd – December 5th, 2009

Opening Reception: Friday October 23rd, 6 – 8pm



Friedrich Petzel Gallery is please to announce "General Control" an exhibition of new works by Sarah Morris.

"It all gets back that there is no inside or outside, you're just a part of it. There is no periphery. There is no being on the edge. You're in this system. To me, that is what the films and the paintings aspire to confront".¹

Sarah Morris is an internationally recognized painter and filmmaker, known for her complex abstractions, which play with architecture and the psychology of urban environments. Morris views her paintings as parallel to her films - both trace urban, social and bureaucratic topologies. In both these media, she explores the psychology of the contemporary city and its architecturally encoded politics. Morris assesses what today's urban structures, bureaucracies, cities and nations might conceal and surveys how a particular moment can be inscribed and embedded into its visual surfaces. Often, these non-narrative fictional analyses result in studies of conspiratorial power, structures of control, and the mapping of global socio-political networks.

In this exhibition, Morris will be exhibiting a new series of paintings, "Knots" and "Clips". Forms reminiscent of knots or paper clips intertwine. These simple binding structures suggest a transition from enduring utility to contingent organization or text, data and copied material. Morris's paintings create a form that is continuously splintering and self-generating, and without resolution, creating after-images of capitalism and pre-images of new systems of control. Morris's project, which spans both painting and film, creates a new level of discourse - playing simultaneously architecture, industrial design, entertainment, commerce and politics. Morris portrays, with beguiling perfection, bureaucratic structures of control and networks and the attempt to mask their own power. The infiltration and use of these mainstream forms and the creation of systems of interpretation that are ambivalent and even possibly contradictory is achieved by engaging and investigating moments of failure toward its use and avoidance.

The exhibition will also feature Morris's new film *Beijing* shot during the 2008 Olympics. *Beijing* observes the overwhelmingly perplexing and contradictory economy and politics of China, made all the more resonant in the current climate of the global credit crisis. The film explores the spectacle that unfolded during the opening of the 2008 Olympics. Shot from multiple perspectives and given unprecedented access by the International Olympic Committee, *Beijing* captures the variances within the city, from the urban routine of its citizens to the choreographed actions of various heads of state. Morris employs the notion of duality, coupling it with the constant presence of the spectacle or the event and its constant multiple interpretations. Morris's version of cinema vérité uses not only architecture and its infrastructure as phantom characters, but also exposes political leaders, Olympic athletes, actors, film directors, and architects in a quasi-narrative about this developing city that opens up numerous fictional possibilities and questions the authorship of the spectacle itself and ultimately, the role of the artist.

Morris lives and works in New York and London. She received the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painting Award in 2001, and in 1999-2000 was an American Academy Award, Berlin Prize Fellow. Morris recently has had two extensive solo exhibitions in Europe at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt and Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, where they co-produced the publication "Beijing" along with Witte de With, Rotterdam. She has extensively exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions including Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel (2008), the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2006), Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2005), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2005), Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2005), Kunstforeningen, Copenhagen (2004), Miami MOCA (2002), Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C. (2002), and Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2001). She will be realizing two permanent site-specific artworks in 2010 at the Gateway School of Science

in Queens with the architectural firm Pei Cobb Freed and Partners and another at K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen Museum in Düsseldorf, Germany.

Sarah Morris. *Art in America*. December 2008