

Following the exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus (Aarau, Switzerland), this fall MAGASIN will welcome the solo exhibition of the Swiss artist Mai-Thu Perret.

This exhibition will present all the aspects of this internationally renowned artist's work. It will present the various approaches of Mai-Thu Perret's multifaceted artistic practice by showing existing works and works specifically created for this show.

The multidisciplinary artist handles a wide range of artistic media from sculpture, painting and ceramics to video, sound, but also text. Influenced by the 20th century avant-garde movements and by oriental philosophies, the work of Mai-Thu Perret has numerous cultural, historical and literary references.

Mai-Thu Perret began her artistic career at the end of the 90s, after studying English literature and while she was leading the contemporary art space Forde in Geneva. She has drawn attention internationally with her piece *Crystal Frontier*, a fiction about an imaginary group of women living in the New Mexico desert. She has been developing the fictional story of this utopian community for ten years. To give it substance, she has been creating a logbook and craft objects which belong to these women. In her work, Mai-Thu Perret likes to mix fiction and reality by bringing in historic and literary references, in order to cloud the issues and multiply the interpretations. Through fiction she returns to the past to question the present. With her work, she reflects on the inheritance of utopian thinking in contemporary capitalist society. Her piece *Perpetual Time Clock* is related to the rhythm of life in the women's commune. This huge clock marks the time by symbols which represent the routine in a day which structures community life.

The title of the exhibition *The Adding Machine* refers to the title of a collection of essays by the writer William S. Burroughs* and its technique called "cut-up" which consists in cutting up and reassembling text passages. Those different combinations highlight new symbols which allow a new interpretation of the work. In the same way, Mai-Thu Perret puts together in each of her exhibitions her pieces in a different way, in order to give us another artistic reading, each time renewed and surprising. The goal is not to show the works autonomously but to articulate them like a sentence.

Many artists have drawn inspiration from the past or from «primitive» art to create. With *The Adding Machine*, a copy of an archaeological stone sculpture from the prehispanic city of Teotihuacan in Mexico, Mai-Thu Perret is radical. She is not inspired by Mexican art, she copies it entirely. She plays on the dissonance between the object and its environment. The jaguar testifies to vanished culture in a process of dislocation and transformation. From its original site, it became an item of

collection then exhibition. Mai-Thu Perret copies and decontextualises this object in order to highlight the tension between reality and illusion. This reflection on art of the past and on the fact that art does not exist independently of history made Mai-Thu Perret use materials abandoned by contemporary art such as textile, tapestry and traditional and craft techniques such as ceramics.

Mai-Thu Perret was born in Geneva in 1976 where she lives and works. She studied English literature in Cambridge and completed the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. She recently received the Zürich Art Prize as well as the Manor Art Award Geneva.

Curator of the exhibition: Yves Aupetitallot

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue published by JRP- Ringier.

The exhibition *The Adding Machine* was presented in a modified form in the summer of 2011 at the Argauer Kunsthauus.

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