

Sprüth Magers Berlin is delighted to present a solo exhibition of work by Jenny Holzer. Entitled *Endgame*, the exhibition includes a series of paintings marking the artist's return to the medium after more than thirty years.

Jenny Holzer searches for ways to make narrative a part of visual objects, employing an innovative range of materials and presentations to confront emotions and experiences, politics and conflict. While looking for subject matter for electronics and projections, the artist located a number of redacted, declassified government documents including policy memos, autopsy reports, and statements by American administration officials, soldiers, detainees, and others, generated during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These opaque documents became the foundation for Holzer's silkscreened paintings in 2005; she began to create the fully hand-painted works on show in the gallery in 2010. Color, scale, and the mark of the hand are the only alterations that the artist makes; the graphic geometric shapes are the censor's, and the surviving text is original. Holzer's subtle alterations exacerbate how much one isn't allowed to see.

The *waterboard white* (2012) is an arrangement of rectangles and lines. Two segments consist of legible text: "detainees have undergone" and "the waterboard." The minimal appearance of language renders the painting's impact especially striking; this is in contrast with the pale segments of redacted text that comprise the rest of the work, highlighting what remains hidden. In other paintings, Holzer transforms the redaction into units of bright color. In *Top Secret 7*, 2011, a blackened paragraph is reproduced as a chromatic fade, consisting of bands of blended tones. Black dissolves into purple before diminishing into red and pink. Before the paragraph ends, pale blue turns white only to open into tangerine and orange. When a document is rendered as complex painting, one can conceive of the censored article as a contrivance - what is it working to hide?

Yet these paintings function as formalist works of art, improbably evoking a long history of avant-garde abstraction, in particular the Constructivist legacy and its notion that art could be directed towards social purposes. By referencing the historical avant garde with its faith in the power of art to change the world, Holzer's paintings ask us to consider the relationship between painting and politics in the present. Holzer started in anger and mourning when torture was institutionalized. While rigorous and meditative painting cannot undo acts or by itself conjure optimism, it can suggest a means of working that is outside of cynicism. The paintings suggest that even misplaced or fugitive hopefulness is preferable to capitulation.

Also on view is Holzer's LED artwork, *MONUMENT*, 2008. Upon entering the gallery the viewer is confronted by semi-circular elements arranged as a ceiling-high tower. Like moments in the

paintings, the artwork displays texts from declassified U.S. government documents stemming from the wars in the Middle East. Language that reports recent history, and speaks of power, conviction, abuse, ideals, and belief, pulses in red, blue, pink, and white light. Recognized as Holzer's signature medium, electronic signs have been part of the artist's practice since the early eighties, and MONUMENT demonstrates Holzer's increasing use of the medium for its sculptural capacities. Though the artist initially turned to the LED sign for its association with news and advertising, and as a mode of direct address, she now also uses the electronic sign for its ability to manipulate space and augment architecture.

The exhibition extends to the garden where two of the artist's benches are on display. The benches, made from sandstone, are inscribed with words from Holzer's Erlauf, 1995. Erlauf followed the War, 1992 and Lustmord, 1993-94 text series, in which Holzer focused on the atrocities of combat. Referring to the site where Russian and American officers met to declare peace in 1945, Erlauf memorializes lives lost and peace gained in World War II. Holzer began working with stone in 1986. Her idea was to find a home for her texts that was resistant to the vagaries of time and destruction, as lasting as the light of her electronic signs is transitory. The bench form was selected because it offered people a place to sit and converse with others. The utility of the object allows her to insinuate texts that aren't immediately consistent with the domestic or park-like settings where they might be placed.

Jenny Holzer lives and works in New York. In 1990 she represented the United States at the Venice Biennale where she won the Leone d'Oro for Best Pavilion. Solo shows include ICA, London (1988), Dia Art Foundation, New York (1989), Guggenheim Museum, New York (1989), Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1991), Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2000), Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2001, 2011), The Barbican Centre, London (2006), Whitney Museum, New York (2009), Foundation Beyeler, Basel (2009), DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art, Montreal (2010), and The Baltic, Gateshead (2010). Group shows include Whitney Museum, New York (1983, 1988, 1989, 1996), documenta 8, Kassel (1987), Centre Pompidou, Paris (1988, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005), MoMA, New York (1988, 1992, 1996, 1997, 2005, 2008), Hayward Gallery, London (1992), Venice Biennale, Venice (2005), The Barbican Centre, London (2008) and Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2011).

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*