

Elizabeth Dee

545 WEST 20TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10011
T 212 924 7545
F 212 924 7671
WWW.ELIZABETHDEEGALLERY.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bring the War Home

Organized by Drew Heitzler

Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York: July 4th through August 19th, 2006
With *Domestic Affairs*: A Reading by Fia Backström on Thursday, July 27th at 9:00 PM
QED, Los Angeles: July 8th through August 12th, 2006

Elizabeth Dee and QED are pleased to announce the opening of *Bring the War Home*, an exhibition organized by Drew Heitzler.

That the art world, now a global multi-billion dollar industry, is not part of the “real world” is one of the most absurd fictions of art discourse. The current market boom, to mention only the most obvious example, is a direct product of neo-liberal economic policies. It belongs, first of all, to the luxury consumption boom that has gone along with growing income disparities and concentrations of wealth – the beneficiaries of Bush’s tax cuts are our patrons – and secondly, to the same economic forces that have created the global real-estate bubble: lack of confidence in the bond market due to rising national debt, low interest rates, and regressive tax cuts...

...In this art market, we [the artists] are its direct material beneficiaries. Every time we speak of the “institution” as other than “us”, we disavow our role in the creation and perpetuation of its conditions. We avoid responsibility for, or actions against, the everyday complicities, compromises, and censorship – above all, self-censorship – which are driven by our own interests in the field and the benefits we derive from it. It’s not a question of inside or outside, or the number and scale of various organized sites for the production, presentation, and distribution of art. It’s not a question of being against the institution: We are the institution. It’s a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kind of rewards we aspire to. Because the institutions of art are internalized, embodied, and performed by individuals, these are the questions that institutional critique demands we ask, above all, of ourselves.

–Andrea Fraser, 2005

Flush or not, people are frustrated. In private many say most of the shows they see are safe or conservative. Yet most reviews are enthusiastic or merely descriptive. Too many critics act like cheerleaders, reporters or hip metaphysicians. Amid art fair frenzy, auction madness, money lust and market hype; between galleries turning into selling machines, gossip passing as criticism and art becoming a good job; the system, while efficient, feels faulty, even false...

...The good news is that many people seem ready to do something about this situation, rather than just get through it. Things are simmering. More and more artists, gallerists and curators, disturbed by the status quo, are taking matters into their own hands. Much more needs to happen. Artists should curate shows, write about them and make their own publications. The agenda needs to be set by artists, not the market. Supply-and-demand thinking has to shift to

production-and-experience thinking. Small communities or cells of artists, curators and critics should band together, take positions, make cogent arguments, and put those things out there.

–Jerry Saltz, 2005

Bring the War Home, the title of this exhibition, is most recognizable as the title of Martha Rosler's series of Vietnam era photo collages. It was also the battle cry of the Weather Underground, who protested that war by blowing up police cars and the offices of war profiteers. This show, however, is not about Vietnam. The war we are fighting, if it even is a war, is against the current political/economic state of affairs that has brought us not only Iraq and New Orleans, but also an art world bubble of endless art fair drudgery and too many boring exhibitions that ignore the current socio-economic climate.

All of the artists in this exhibition understand the paradoxical position from which they operate. They accept the terms of the social contract into which they have entered, but sometimes bite the hand that feeds them. They understand the importance of commercial galleries but also the importance of artist-created systems of distribution that exist alongside of, but separate from, the gallery system; interventions, subtle and otherwise, in the belly of the beast. All are involved in practices and projects that operate in this way.

Bring the War Home will exhibit art works made for the commercial sphere, as well as ephemera and documentation from the curatorial, performance, and publishing projects (made by artists for artists) that are also an important part of these artists' practice. By presenting this work together in a commercial gallery, the paradoxical position of the artist is laid bare; the war is brought home, and the artist-driven activity which Jerry Saltz calls for and the internal self-reckoning that Andrea Fraser calls for is shown to be very much in practice already.

Bring the War Home is a joint exhibition that will be displayed both at the Elizabeth Dee Gallery in New York and QED in Los Angeles. It is an exhibition of collaborators, orchestrators, publishers, producers, and pirates organized by Drew Heitzler, co-founder of Champion Fine Art, a two-year gallery project of 21 artist-curated exhibitions that ran from September 2003 to November 2005. A catalog for *Bring the War Home* with a text by Walead Beshty will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Elizabeth Dee Gallery will be featuring works by:

Mai-Thu Perret, Philippe Decrauzat, John Armleder, Simon Bedwell, Cyprien Gaillard and Payam Sharifi, Mario Garcia Torres, Joel Mesler, David Hatcher, Alice Konitz, Erlea Maneros, Nate Harrison, Margo Victor, Walead Beshty, Kim Gordon, Jutta Koether, Hugo Hopping, Matt Chambers, Marie Jager, Backroom, Reena Spaulings, Peter Coffin, Craig Kalpakjian, Sam Gordon, Michael Phelan, Fia Backström, Sara Greenberger Rafferty, Matthew Brannon, Carrissa Rodriguez and Gardar Eide Einarsson, Amy Granat, Matt Keegan, Nicolas Guagnini, Justin Beal and Vishal Jugdeo, Adam McEwen, and Cheyney Thompson.

QED will be featuring works by:

Diego Fernandez, Karin Schneider, Jeff Preiss, Jason Simon, Rebecca Quaytman, Josh Smith, Reena Spaulings, Jutta Koether, Seth Price, Scott Hug & Michael Magnan, Peter Coffin, Gareth James, Lizzie Bougatsos, Cheyney Thompson, Wade Guyton and Kelley Walker, Steven Parrino, Craig Kalpakjian, Lee Williams, Sam Gordon, Continuous Project, Michael Phelan, Fia Backström, Sara Greenberger Rafferty, Rachel Foullon, Matthew Brannon, Kim Gordon, Adam Putnam, Carrissa Rodriguez and Gardar Eide Einarsson, Amy Granat, Matt Keegan, Nicolas Guagnini, Adam McEwen, Justin Lowe, Nate Loman and Josh Smith, Simon Bedwell, Mai-Thu Perret, John Armleder, Cyprien Gaillard and Payam Sharifi, Philippe Decrauzat, Mountain School, Mario Garcia Torres, Samuel Lewitt, Joel Mesler, David Hatcher, Alice Konitz, Erlea Maneros, Olivier Mosset, Laura Kleger, Nate Harrison, Margo Victor, Bart Exposito, Walead Beshty, Hugo Hopping, Matt Chambers, Marie Jager, Justin Beal and Vishal Jugdeo, and Backroom.

A reception for the exhibition will be held at the Elizabeth Dee Gallery on the 4th of July from 6:00 to 8:00 PM

For more information, please contact Sonny Fitzsimonds: (212) 924-7545

Domestic Affairs: A reading set-up by Fia Backström

Who brought the war home? How was it done? In an era of multiplying, so called, collaborations, endless lists of names are decorating the ubiquitous ads in the art magazines with unclear connections between the work, the acts and the people involved. It is not an easy task to grasp a frontier. What is at stake? Is it freedom? Is it anything at all? What is not visible with a piece-by-piece approach may become clear by putting structures and organizational bonds at the forefront, pushing back the objects to show another story, another version of the same scenario.

End credits are the cinematographic attempt at staking out these relations. Giving credit always leaves someone out. New titles are invented to cover acts no one knows how to label, so that after the job is done these temporary relations will signify as valid interactions. *Domestic Affairs* is a live version of the running text for the exhibition *Bring the War Home*, with special appearances by many of its *unlawful combatants* – a site like home, with or without orange jump-suits.

– Fia Backström

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