

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**MAI-THU PERRET: SLOW WAVE****10 JULY 2014 – 19 AUGUST 2014. PRIVATE VIEW: WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 2014, 6 – 8PM**

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present “Slow Wave”- Mai-Thu Perret's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong. Perret is known for her multidisciplinary, installation-based practice that combines feminist politics with literary texts, homemade crafts and 20th century avant-garde aesthetics. Primary inspiration for Perret's work stems from her fictional narrative *The Crystal Frontier*, which the artist has been writing since 1999. This ongoing story follows a group of women who, in attempt to escape capitalism and patriarchal convention, form a commune called New Ponderosa Year Zero in the remote desert of South western New Mexico.

The language of feminism is only one of numerous voices Perret invokes within her body of work. Constructivism, Marxism, theater, Bauhaus design, nature, the occult, Eastern religions, Art Nouveau, and geometric abstraction are among the diverse subjects that are referenced. Her continually expanding narrative and installations generate a space for Perret to engage these different histories and explore how objects function within and influence the social systems they inhabit.

Perret's latest project features a domestic installation with a bed made of plywood. The design is faithfully replicated from *Autoprogettazione*, a 1974 furniture manual by the Italian Modernist artist and furniture designer Enzo Mari. His simple furniture plans draw inspiration from the idealism of the arts and crafts movement, Utopian ideas of empowering the consumer, reclaiming from the industrial process and his political views as a Communist. Perhaps representing an abstract surrogate for a character in *The Crystal Frontier*, a female figure lies sleeping in the bed, with a mechanism that simulates the movement of her breathing as she deeply slumbers.

The futuristic, gleaming surface of the head and mechanized breathing is particularly uncanny and other worldly when contrasted with the craft elements of the bedcovers and rustic bed. Similarly minimal are the line compositions of Perret's wall-mounted ceramics and textiles that recall ancient symbolic forms. These geometric abstractions resemble a variety of sources including Indian tantric art, and shapes and patterns common in modernist painting and used in portraying the pre-linguistic and universal. The neon work is based on a page from the famous 17th Century novel *Tristram Shandy* by Lawrence Sterne in which the narrator draws out a series of lines to represent the course of his digressions.

Perret's layered, aesthetic world is rich with contrast and unresolved contradictions, reflecting upon the failures of Utopian communities and the tension between art and social revolution. The art objects align not only with *The Crystal Frontier* narrative but towards larger cultural and political dynamics. Playing with these systems power of transformation, the installations themselves exist in contrasting states of pure formalism, applied craft and spiritual discourse, being simultaneously intimate, obscure, experimental, nostalgic, psychological and utilitarian.

Mai Thu Perret (b. 1976) was born in Geneva and studied at Cambridge University and the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York. She has been awarded both the 2011 Zurich Art Prize and le Prix Culturel Manor (2011) and took part in *ILLUMInations* (curated by Bice Curiger) at the 54th Venice Biennale. In 2016 Mai-Thu Perret will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas. Solo exhibitions include Kunsthau Aarau, Mamco, Geneva, (2011); *The Adding Machine*, Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich and Le Magasin, Grenoble, (2011); *Love Letters in Ancient Brick*, Theatre de l'Usine, Geneva and Swiss Institute- Contemporary Art, New York (2011); *An Ideal for Living*, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor (2010); *2013*, The Aspen Art Museum (2009); *New Work*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2008); *An Evening of the Book and Other Stories*, The Kitchen, New York (2008); and *And Every Woman Will Be A Walking Synthesis Of The Universe*, The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2006). Group exhibitions include *Decorum*, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (2013); *Pattern: Follow the Rules*, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing and Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2013); *Anti-Establishment*, CCS Bard Hessel Museum, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (2012); *The Old, the New, the Different*, Kunsthalle Bern (2012); and *Goldene Zeiten*, Haus der Kunst, Munich (2010).

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