

Galerie Mezzanin
Karin Handlbauer
63, rue des Maraîchers
CH -1205 Geneva
T +41 22 328 38 02
geneva@galeriemezzanin.com
www.galeriemezzanin.com

Mai-Thu Perret
Détruire, dit-elle

Galerie Mezzanin, Geneva
5 December 2024–22 February 2025

--

We are pleased to announce „Détruire, dit-elle“ the first solo exhibition of the Geneva artist Mai-Thu Perret at Galerie Mezzanin.

Over the decades, Mai-Thu Perret has developed a distinctive practice that embraces various disciplines (including sculpture, film, ceramics, and performance), references multiple sources (from 20th-century avant-garde movements to Eastern philosophies), and blends numerous methodologies (drawing on her literary studies and experience as a curator).

In the late 1990s, the artist came up with a fictional narrative of a community of women whose history also serves as a starting point for her creative output. In formal terms, Perret’s works then allude to Constructivism and Bauhaus (movements that propounded art as a catalyst for building a new society) as well as to artisanal and decorative forms that have often been sidelined in art history and pigeonholed as feminine. Adding new corpuses to her work, year after year, she excavates artifacts of Modernism and reframes them in today’s world, as if they were chapters in a concrete, existential narrative.

The works shown here combine various techniques (watercolor, tapestry, and ceramics) and styles (found abstraction, figurative appropriation, and expressive and biomorphic shapes) that putatively consign them to different formal registers. Yet in truth, these shapes and materials are the result of transferal and translation: the watercolor relates to the ceramic and may be transformed into tapestry; abstraction is associated with a decorative horizon; and artistic acts are more indicative of plasticity than expressiveness. Among these recent works, the artist made room not just for the non-human but also for “nature,” as viewed through a “cultural” filter influenced by Asian thinking—where rain-shaped stones have a place in the museum, and where the tropical flower known as *Amorphophallus titanum* asserts its “natural” sculptural essence through its towering inflorescence.

The title of the exhibition borrows from a Marguerite Duras book published in 1969. That phrase, typical of the author’s syntactic dislocation, opens a seam of uncertainty, suggesting that, for Perret, a work of art is more akin to intention than action, hypothesis than affirmation, question than answer—it is, quite simply, an utterance.

Perret’s art occupies that ever-evolving space where language and shape overlap: where the organic becomes symbolic.

Biography

Mai-Thu Perret was born and lives in Geneva. She has held solo shows at the following venues: Swiss Institute in Rome (2022); Portique – Centre régional d’art contemporain du Havre, Le Havre (2020); MAMCO, Geneva (2019); Baden Art Association, Karlsruhe (2019); Spike Island, Bristol (2019); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2016); Magasin CNAC, Grenoble (2012); Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2011); University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor (2010); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2008); and Renaissance Society, Chicago (2006). In addition, her works are held in numerous collections, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; MAMCO, Geneva; Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich; and Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris.