

Reena Spaulings

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December 10th 2011 - January 14th 2012

Galerie Chantal Crousel is pleased to announce the second solo exhibition of the New York collective Reena Spaulings.

Reena Spaulings first emerged in the eponymous novel published in 2004¹ as a fictional character of a young woman making her way in the New York art scene of the 2000s. Meanwhile, Reena Spaulings Fine Art opened on Manhattan's Lower East Side and its founding members started commercial and artistic collaborations with the gallery's artists such as Ei Arakawa, Claire Fontaine, Klara Liden, Jutta Koether and Seth Price. Spaulings' artistic work embraces ambiguities that question as much the traditionally accepted notion of authorship, as the customary division of labour within the art world.

For this exhibition titled ; -), Reena Spaulings worked with Catherine Feff for the creation of a large fresco presented at the gallery. Since the 1980s Feff has been recognised for large-scale public-space commissioned work, trompe l'oeil decors and outdoor murals: for instance, in 1988 she completely covered the Arc de Triomphe with a tarpaulin in the colours of the French flag, and in 1990 she turned the Obelisk in the place de la Concorde into a radio station for the fiftieth anniversary of General de Gaulle's appeal of the 18 June. Atelier Feff's projects often involve the beautification/masking of urban construction sites with panoramic scenery painted on tarps. The work created specifically for the exhibition is a cross between Feff's previous work, a discreet and oneiric fresco situated a short walk from the gallery, and the recent opening of the Chelsea High Line, a sort of green walk built on an old aerial rail that snakes between the art galleries on Manhattan's west side.

The High Line is both an industrial relic and a spectacular device that, by elevating the touristic gaze above the street, makes all of New York a sort of trompe l'oeil effect. Rendered in a faux-antique style, the recently renovated structure appears here as a fresh ruin, echoing the obsessive return to bygone eras and manufactured authenticity in contemporary restaurant and hotel design (what Adorno called "resurrected culture"). Such hallucinations of a lost New York are symptomatic of an increasingly abstract and mediated metropolis. Spaulings has removed part of Feff's image to allow access through the gallery door. Cut up fragments of the High Line have been rotated 90 degrees and mounted on canvas to make new, abstract paintings.

Reena Spaulings also shows a new series of monochrome paintings on cardboard. The supports used are actual pizza boxes, the same ones recently used at the Zuccotti Park occupation to spontaneously write protest signs. The cardboard pizza boxes used in the exhibition are the remains of a social event hosted by Reena Spaulings Fine Art in New York. In the exhibition, these boxes are unfolded and painted as monochrome, evoking works by Heimo Zobernig for example, and recalling an earlier series of Spaulings paintings made with tablecloths taken from art world dinners.

Also on view is a series of etchings based on images of unmanned, remotely operated Predator drones (as well as surveillance images produced by the drones' onboard cameras), and in a vitrine a single chromed bedbug, an insect currently proliferating in New York, transformed here into a tiny sculpture.

Thanks to Catherine Feff, David Lasry and Two Palms, Ashley Carter, Jason Loeb, Christine Rebet, Rachel Rose.

Solo exhibitions (selection) : *More Michael Paintings*, Indipendenza Studio, Rome, 2011; *Michael*, Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna; Contemporary Art Museum, Saint Louis, 2008 ; *How To Cook a Wolf*, Kunsthalle Zürich, 2007.

Group exhibitions (selection) : *Dystopia*, CAPC, Bordeaux, 2011; *Seconde main*, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2010 ; *Here Is Every. Four Decades of Contemporary Art*, Museum of Modern Art, New York ; *Pop Life*, Tate Modern, Londres / National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa ; *L'argent*, Le Plateau / Frac Ile-de-France, Paris, 2008 ; *Some Neighbours*, Kunstverein München, Munich, 2008 ; *Make Your Own Life*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, 2007.

¹ Bernadette Corporation, *Reena Spaulings*, Semiotext(e), New York, 2004.