

The Baltic Centre Presents Mariah Robertson's First UK Solo Exhibition

Written by John Charlton

Gateshead, UK.- The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art presents American artist Mariah Robertson's first solo exhibition in the UK, opening on Saturday 25th June. Highly aware of our technology-saturated world, the images Mariah Robertson creates typically have a nostalgia that, at first, seems to hark back to a slower, pre-digital era. Using photographic paper, often at a monumental scale, her darkroom experiments utilise analogue techniques now in their demise to create a synergy between chance, luck and her highly-considered methods. "Maria Robertson" will be on view at the Baltic through October 30th.

Robertson manipulates the tools and materials of the photographic process to capitalise on their inherent strengths and weaknesses. She uses photographs, photograms, colour separation, oversaturated hues and exposes objects directly onto the paper, bypassing the camera lens. An array of chemical drips and mishaps are also used to 'paint' the photographic surface. Collageing disparate elements onto irregularly cut photographic paper, Robertson layers them into a single composition to create what she terms an 'impossible' image. The elaborate compositions, lush with colour, include both representative and abstract images; recent motifs include palm fronds, male nudes and grids. However, her works are as much about the process of making as they are the interplay between different images and sources.

Her work is presented in a way that brings a sculptural presence. "8", 2011, included in the exhibition, rests in a heavy, over-sized frame that stands directly on the floor and leans against the wall. The roughly-cut glossy, metallic paper is allowed to curl inside, pressing against its limits. "9", 2011, also included, is an entire roll of photographic paper, a structure that runs across and cascades from the ceiling, unraveling around the gallery like a film-strip. The physicality brought about by these modes of display moves the work far beyond the traditions of her chosen medium. Re-writing its rules, she also preserves them, encapsulating a time and method before it disappears completely.

Mariah Robertson was born in 1975. In 1997 she was awarded a BA from University of California, Berkeley, California and gained a MFA in sculpture from Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut in 2005. Her solo exhibitions include 'I am Passions', Marvelli Gallery, NY (2009), 'Nudes, Still Lives and Landscapes', Guild & Greyskul, New York (2007) and 'Please lie down and take a nap with me in my grave', Guild & Greyskul, New York (2006). She has presented work in the following group shows: 'Greater New York', PS1, New York (2010), 'Out of Focus: Photography', Saatchi Gallery London (2009), 'The Company Presents: A

Video Screening', Miami Beach Florida (2009) and 'Palmar: Experimental Photography', Marvelli Gallery New York (2009). 'Sonata for Executioner and Various Young Women', André Schleichtriem Contemporary, New York, NY (2008), 'FRIENDLY', CRG Gallery, New York, NY (2008). 'Where To: Artists Environ a Cab', The Lab, San Francisco (2007) and 'STUFF: International Contemporary Art from the Collection of Burt Asron', Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit (2007). 'The Truth About Susan Gescheidle The Centre of Attention', Chicago (2006) and 'Help Yourself', Helen Pitt Gallery, Vancouver (2006). Loop Video Festival, Barcelona (2005), 'Great Indoor', Walter Gallery San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco (2003). Mariah Robertson lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.