

Galerie Francesca Pia

Mai-Thu Perret

With an unbounded force

June 20 – August 29, 2020

Opening Friday June 20, 5–8 pm

Galerie Francesca Pia is pleased to announce an exhibition with new ceramic works by Mai-Thu Perret.

Since the late 1990s, Perret's work evolved around *The Crystal Frontier*, a fictional narrative about a group of feminist activists who broke away from patriarchal society to found a utopian community. This ever-expanding narrative serves as the background for Perret's broad net of reference, reaching from literature to the craft focused movements of the late 19th and early 20th century, avant-garde aesthetics of modernity, the spiritual and the poetic that she virtuously intertwines with art-immanent questions of materiality and form. From early on, ceramic material played a fundamental role in Perret's practice owing to its wide-ranging anthropological significance, inherent tactility and reliance upon the transformative role played by fire.

The new series of works in this exhibition started out from Perret's interest in looking at the motif of the witch from a feminist perspective. The series of masks alludes to the transformation of witches into animals or the possibility of being possessed by other subjectivities. *Abnormally avid II*, a basket of half eaten, slightly rotten apples recalls the image of the poisonous apple offered to Snow White by the wicked witch.

As the Italian Marxist and feminist writer Silvia Federici argues, the witch historically embodies an exemplary counter figure within historical transition from feudalism to capitalism when woman as a part of the division of labor began to be tied to the domestic field. At that time witchcraft and Satanic worship became an expression of peasant and working class rebellion against this transition towards capitalism.

Perret's works recall the witch not only as a historical figure but as an archetype of the non-compliant woman – as a perceived threat to fertility, reproduction and patriarchy – that continues to live on in popular culture and fairy tales.

Mai-Thu Perret has exhibited internationally since the early 2000s. Selected institutional solo exhibitions include Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (2019), Spike Island, Bristol (2019), MAMCO, Geneva (2018), NICC, Brussels (2017), Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2016), Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aargau (2011), Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2011), MAMCO, Geneva (2011), Aspen Art Museum (2009), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2008), The Kitchen, New York (2008), The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2006), Chisenhale Gallery, London (2006). Recent institutional group exhibition include Glasgow International, Glasgow (2019), Met Breuer, New York (2019), The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Connecticut (2018), Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich (2018), Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2018), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2018), Kunsthaus Zurich (2018), Kunsthalle Basel (2018), Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2017), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2016), Swiss Institute, New York (2015), Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht (2015) and Migros Museum, Zurich (2015). Her work forms part of the collection of many major institutions.