

ANCIENT & MODERN

PRESS RELEASE
MELISSA GORDON - EXQUISITE CORPSE
12 APRIL - 19 MAY

ANCIENT & MODERN presents new paintings and sculpture by Melissa Gordon.

'Exquisite Corpse', Gordon's first UK exhibition, explores a frequently misunderstood and overlooked heritage of feminist art production. Iconic images of performances, paintings, photographs and images of female practitioners are presented, painted on linen and on wooden constructions - the latter based upon dress patterns by Russian Constructivist artists Liubov Popova and Varvara Stepanova and Bauhaus textile designers.

'The Satisfaction of Knowing', operates as something of a key to the exhibition. Images taken directly from magazines (such as 'Heresies,' and 'Chrysalis'), the covers of books on semantics by Derrida and Kristeva and other printed ephemera are painted together, as if collaged, over a red ground derived from a photograph of Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro's 'Womanhouse' project (1972).

Unlike, for example, Mary Beth Edelson's famous feminist collages, such as 'Some Living American Woman Artists' (1972), Gordon's paintings are not polemical but build upon this subversive history to explore and reflect upon the heritage in which she works.

'Exquisite Corpse' also includes a series of paintings of different body parts including images based upon photographs of the eye make-up of punk girls in the 1970s, a copy of Peter Rubens' 'The Head of Medusa' (c.1610) (itself made after Caravaggio's painting of the same subject from 1590) and of Faye Dunaway as Bonnie Parker from 'Bonnie and Clyde' (1967) widen Gordon's exegesis of transgressive women and monstrous representations of them.

Gordon explores genealogies, biographies and histories. She appropriates iconographic images and recontextualises them asking questions both formally, in terms of painting, and in terms of their subjects. Previous subjects have included a schizophrenic murderer - suffering from what is understood in Lacanian thinking to be a 'confusion of signifiers,'

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controversial, female politicians such as Indira Ghandi and Margaret Thatcher and, more recently, historic museum displays that chronicle the passage of private collections to public institutions and the advent of an interest in the 'other'. Marlene Dumas has written of her work: 'It's flat, but it throws a shadow'.

Melissa Gordon (b. Boston MA, 1981) studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, Cooper Union, New York and at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. She has previously held solo exhibitions at Galerie Michael Cosar in Düsseldorf and Galerie Juliette Jongma in Amsterdam (both 2006). In 2005 she was the recipient of the prestigious Koninklijke Prijs voor Vrije Schilderkunst. Now based in Berlin, her work will be included in 'Compilation III', a survey of young German painters held at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf 21 April - 9 July.

For further information please contact rob@ancientandmodern.org

Exhibition preview: Wednesday 11 April, 6 - 8pm

Open Wednesdays - Saturdays 12 - 6pm and by appointment.

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