

LUCINDA DEVLIN

WATER RITES

APRIL 19 – MAY 26, 2007

Paul Rodgers/9W is pleased to announce an exhibition of images from Lucinda Devlin's 'Water Rites' series. This will be the gallery's third exhibition of this internationally admired American fine art photographer. Executed in Germany, beginning in the late 1990's, on the theme of that country's health spas, 'Water Rites' is the first work that Devlin has undertaken outside the United States.

Lucinda Devlin belongs to the generation of American photographers that pioneered color fine art photography. However, her strict approach to both form and subject matter has created a unique and independent vision, all her own. Devlin uses a square format to photograph architectural interiors with the human subject notably absent. The technique forces her to step in closer to her subject, creating a sense of intimacy and spatial depth. Each series explores a carefully selected theme as one element of a broader subject that could be characterized as "the study of how human sensation is 'compartmentalized' by contemporary culture". It is the apparent contradiction of human absence, and by implication re-presentation, that sets up the curious ambiguity of Devlin's images, where a strong sense of improvisational narrative is instilled. How does this narrative play out? In the absence of the human subject, the inanimate background of Devlin's image is thrust forward and forced to carry a burden of meaning. However, instead of a clear response, or the illusion of closure, viewers will find that the photograph draws them into its space, so that they become the protagonists of the scene. In Devlin's hands, the camera becomes a vehicle of powerful aesthetic inquiry into where we stand in the real world that surrounds us.

Previously acclaimed for her 'Omega Suites', which investigate the execution wards of America's prison system, and 'Pleasure Ground', a bitter-sweet peep show of the pay-as-you-go leisure industry of Middle-America, 'Water Rites' significantly complicates the issue of point-of-view by introducing a foreign context with a long historical tradition. The social institution of the bath traces its history back to Roman times. The bath spas of Germany have traditionally been associated with medicinal purposes and contrast with the American paradigm of the public bath as a place of deviance and salacious fantasy or the beauty spa of frivolity and leisure. The specific interiors of 'Water Rites' convey a sense of contrivance, with scenes that seem too perfect. One wonders if such places, with saturated color values and false symmetrical harmony, actually exist. A further ominous layer of ambiguity is added when 'Water Rites' is contextualized with the execution and leisure interiors of her earlier work. They share recognizable objects such as chairs and beds but we are left to imagine what pleasure or pain other featured devices may administer. Always Devlin's position is to ask what we bring, by way of association, to the image and in what measure the image confirms and belies our expectations.

Lucinda Devlin has been featured in numerous solo and group international museum exhibitions. She has also been included in many international biennials, notably Venice 2001 and Sao Paulo, 2002. She has received fellowships from the NEA and the Aaron Siskind Foundation, and has been an Artist in Residency in the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, Berlin. Steidl Verlag has published two books on Devlin's photography, the first on the 'Omega Suites' and most recently on 'Water Rites'. The exhibition will present 11 images of 'Water Rites'. The photographs are chromogenic color prints and will be available in 19 ½ by 19 ½ in. and 29 ½ by 29 ½ in. formats.

For more information please contact:

PAUL RODGERS/9W

529 W 20th Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10011

t:212 414 9810 f:347 438 3309

e: info@paulroddgers9w.com

www.paulroddgers9w.com