

STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

Rivane Neuenschwander

13 March – 12 April 2008

Private view Wednesday 12 March 2008

The natural world has always been at the heart of Rivane Neuenschwander's work. Exploring nature's hidden and often chaotic logic, Neuenschwander has created a diverse and intimate body of work mapping and charting this evolving terrain. In her fourth exhibition at Stephen Friedman Gallery, the artist will present a major new installation alongside film, sculpture and work on paper.

Rivane Neuenschwander frequently employs a simple framework to convey complex ideas, testing her hypothesis numerous times and allowing her subject to determine its own evolution. In this exhibition, a series of related works explore and navigate a multitude of topologies, her vocabulary taking on a new significance in the context of heightened attention to the effects and immediacy of climate change.

Continent Cloud (2007) is an installation occupying the entire backspace of the gallery. Its minimal presence becomes apparent when setting foot within its environment. Here, the changing forms of a cloudscape are played out discreetly in the ceiling space of the gallery. Trapped within a suspended ceiling, a dynamic mass accumulates and dissolves into a shifting cycle of solid forms – islands, continents and archipelagos.

A new body of paintings, *Rain Maps* (2008), is shown alongside a sculptural work *Continental* (2008). The *Rain Maps* are fourteen equally sized maps that were exposed to the torrential downpours of Brazil's rainy season. The weather system leaves its mark on the surface of the paper, diluting inks, smudging boundaries and dissolving landmasses to create unique and uncharted terrain. A humanist desire to create order is reintroduced by imposing a grid over this ravaged territory. The remains of the map are put back in place, before a deluge of painted colour sweeps in and floods the damaged surface.

By contrast, *Continental* (2008) is more melancholy in tone. The sense of isolation and loneliness is suggested in the works' title and refers to geological formation of islands born out of fragmentation or erosion. Here, an enormous aluminium basin is filled with cloudy water and floating within are several smaller, empty basins. The constellation of small basins, each its own island, move in response to the shifting seas that are contained in the larger basin. Here the islands are defined by the emptiness of the basins articulating a lack of symbolic or physical boundaries.

A new film work *Contingent* (2008), recalls the didactic videos screened by natural history museums. Made with time-lapse photography, the film deconstructs the formation of the continents by allowing nature's wilful course to unfold. A map of the world, rendered in honey, is gradually consumed by an army of tiny ants. Landmasses shrink to islands, isolated from their previously contiguous bodies. The whole is reduced to parts, and the system of the seven continents is reformed into a strange new alignment.

Rivane Neuenschwander (born 1967) lives and works in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She will

Museum, New York, in Spring 2009. Past solo exhibitions include Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo, Brazil (2007); Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York (2006); St Louis Art Museum, St Louis, MO (2004); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2003); Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, MN (2002) and Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany (2001). Recent group exhibitions include *Comic Abstraction: Image-Breaking, Image-Making*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2007); *The Shapes Of Space*, Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY (2007); *Tropicalia*, Barbican Art Centre, London; touring to Centro Cultural de Belem, Lisbon, Portugal and Bronx Museum, New York, NY (2006); *Always a Little Further*, 51st Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2005) and *Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer*, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2003). Her work is included in the collections of Tate Modern, London, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Forthcoming exhibition: **Stephan Balkenhol**, 26 April – 24 May 2008
Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am-6pm and Saturday 11am-5pm
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