



512 West 19th Street New York, NY 10011  
tel 212 255 5793 www.thekitchen.org

Press Contact: Blake Zidell & Associates  
tel: 718.643.9052  
fax: 718.643.9502  
blake@blakezidell.com, or  
dave@blakezidell.com

For Immediate Release

## **The Kitchen presents the first New York solo exhibition by Mai-Thu Perret**

New York, NY, December 12, 2007—**The Kitchen** is delighted to present the first New York solo exhibition by Geneva-based artist **Mai-Thu Perret**, whose installation work interrogates aspects of contemporary consumerist culture through the lens of the utopian, avant-garde ideals of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and explores how the past continues to be an ongoing active force in shaping the present. Titled *An Evening of the Book and Other Stories*, the exhibition features a new co-commissioned video project and related sculptures that engage aspects of Russian Constructivist-era art history, such as references to agit-prop graphic design as well as theatrical costumes and sets that reflect the earlier symbolism of their revolutionary ideals.

Curated by **Debra Singer** and **Rashida Bumbray**, *An Evening of the Book and Other Stories* will be on view from **January 11—March 8, 2008**. The Kitchen's gallery hours are **Tuesday—Friday, 12:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.** and **Saturday, 11:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.** Admission is free. There will be **an opening reception** at The Kitchen (512 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street) **Friday, January 11 from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.**

Comprised of two parts, *An Evening of the Book and Other Stories*, like Perret's previous work, re-uses layers of historical fragments so that elements of the past can signify something new in the changed context of today. The new co-commissioned video installation, which was included in the *2007 Lyon Biennial*, is made up of three videos projected within a luminous wallpapered environment. The video takes its inspiration from Vitalii Zhemchuzhnyi's 1924 agit-prop Russian theater work of the same name (*An Evening of the Book*) and primarily draws on the production's set design by Varvara Stepanova, one of the most influential figures of the Russian avant-garde. Stepanova's work epitomized the Constructivist tenet that art should have a social purpose and should work toward the development of a socialist society. Within Perret's project, Stepanova serves as a kind of invisible heroine; her presence most evident in the costume designs and within the patterned wallpaper that covers the surfaces of the video room. The video itself evokes a dreamy logic as a group of women are seen at work, play, and rest, and incorporates abstract choreographed movement, with dancers repeating specific gestures and interacting with set elements that echo Constructivist geometries. The exhibition will also include sculptural elements that relate closely to the world of the video, such as new wall drawings, mannequin, textile, and neon works.

**Mai-Thu Perret** was born in 1976 in Geneva, Switzerland. She received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the University of Cambridge in 1997 and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York in 2003. She received the Federal Award of Art, Switzerland in 2004 and has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions. She has held solo exhibitions at The Renaissance Society in Chicago; Centre d'art contemporain in Geneva; The Modern Institute in Glasgow, United Kingdom; Glassbox in Paris; Barbara Weiss Gallery in Berlin; and Galerie Francesca Pia in Bern. She has been included in group exhibitions at Artist Space, New York; PS1 MoMA in New York; the Swiss Institute in New York; The National Art Center in Georgia; Midway Contemporary Art in Minneapolis; and Kunsthalle Exnergasse in Vienna. Perret currently lives and works between Geneva and New York.

## **Funding Credits**

This exhibition is made possible with generous support from Pro Helvetia, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.



## **ABOUT THE KITCHEN**

The Kitchen is one of New York City's oldest nonprofit performance and exhibition spaces, showing experimental work by innovative artists, both emerging and established. Programs range from dance, music, and theatrical performances to video and media arts exhibitions to literary events, film screenings, and artists' talks. Since its inception in 1971, The Kitchen has been a powerful force in shaping the cultural landscape of this country and has helped launch the careers of many artists who have gone on to worldwide prominence.

### Box Office Information:

212.255. 5793 x 11

Tue-Sat, 2-6pm

### The Kitchen

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