

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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CAMILLE SOLYAGUA

NEW PHOTOGRAMS: $4\pi R^2$

ULRIKE PALMBACH

NEW WORKS

September 4 - September 26, 2003

Opening reception: Thursday, September 4 from 5:30-7:30pm

The Stephen Wirtz Gallery is pleased to exhibit new photograms by Camille Solyagua and recent works by Ulrike Palmbach. This is Solyagua's first exhibition at Wirtz Gallery and coincides with the new publication of this series by Nazraeli Press.

Inspired by the complexities of the sphere and its profound significance in our universe, Solyagua has experimented in the darkroom, projecting light through a combination of liquids onto photographic paper producing images of distant worlds that exist for a matter of seconds. These elegant images play with our perceptions of light and dark, liquid and solid, time, distance and scale. Solyagua's photographs can be viewed as invitations to contemplate the beauty of the natural world. They can also be interpreted as emblematic metaphors for isolation and the encapsulated realities in which we live. Suggesting the invisible by focusing on the visible, Solyagua constructs an enigmatic bridge between the micro and macrocosmic world. Her small-scale liquid concoctions also help us to reflect on the mystery of the cosmos and the delicate balance in which our world exists.

Solyagua's earlier work concentrated primarily on a lyrical collection of flora and fauna. She photographed botanical forms insects, wings, birds, feathers, eggs and marine life, recalling the scientific samples of the British photographers Henry Fox Talbot and Anna Atkins. Solyagua has long been intrigued by the 18th century practice of specimen collecting as a way to document and explore the natural world around us. Her interest also led her to photograph specimen collections in the Musee Naturelle d Histoire in Paris and La Specola Museum in Florence, as a way to develop her own personal cabinet of curiosities.

Camille Solyagua began exhibiting her photographs in 1995 and has had numerous one person and group exhibitions in the United States and abroad. Her works are included in such collections as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

Exhibited in the 2nd gallery are sculptural works by German-born artist, Ulrike Palmbach. For the dramatic centerpiece of the exhibition, Palmbach constructed a life-size effigy of a cow covered with a hand-sewn, patchwork skin of muslin. Palmbach created this powerful work as the embodiment of the horrors of war and the plight of the innocent in extreme, violent circumstances. An excerpt from her statement describes her choice of imagery, inspired by her parents' tales of their own childhood experience of the World War II bombings in Germany that were relayed to Palmbach as a child:

"When the bombers were flying over the villages, people would crouch in their basements and so the cows often could not be milked. This caused them to "scream" in agony, for their udders were bursting...This primal outcry of a large animal was the first thing that came to my adult mind as the US began the Iraq war..."

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