

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Casemore, (415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgallery.com

ULRIKE PALMBACH

Sculpture

Exhibition dates: March 2-April 16, 2005

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, March 3, 2005, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces an exhibition of new sculptural installations by Ulrike Palmbach. Palmbach is noted for her highly original use of soft materials such as fabric and felt blankets to create surrealistic effigies of ordinary objects and domestic animals. Palmbach's selection of materials and her reduction of the recognizable forms of the objects she references invert our perception of the commonplace to draw associations with the psychology of human anxiety, fear, and need for protection, comfort and nourishment. The viewer is struck by uncertainty of the familiar taking on unknown properties and attributes.

Featured in the exhibition are three installations: *Cow*, *Hive*, and *Spell*. *Cow* is a life-size representation of a reclining cow created from an armature and stuffing that is covered with a skin of patched muslin, which reveals a hand-sewn construction. With this monumental work, Palmbach urgently responds to concerns about current world events by finding form for a terrifying wartime story revealed to the artist by her parents who were children in WWII. *Hive* is a stack of milk crates painstakingly created from sewn blankets. The crates droop and sag as they tenuously balance upon each other awaiting reassignment in the cycle of consumption. *Spell* reveals a *mise-en-scene* of a mysterious gathering of cats. Each is constructed from patched fabric and stuffing and lazily surround a mat made of sticky tar. The creatures are inactive and indifferent, self-satisfied, lending a distinctively ominous air to the grouping.

In the accompanying catalogue essay, Lilly Wei states "Palmbach's dialectic alternates between the banal and the Dadaist, the serious and the absurd, the repetitive and the singular. Palmbach is subversive in small, understated ways, her acts of transformation almost throwaways, but no less potent for it."

Ulrike Palmbach was born in Sindelfingen, Germany, and received her BFA from San Francisco Art Institute. She has exhibited with Stephen Wirtz Gallery since 1996.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is located at 49 Geary St., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.

For additional information please contact Julie Casemore, Tel.: (415) 433-6879