

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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ULRIKE PALMBACH

New Work

Exhibition dates: February 15-March 24, 2007; Opening reception for the artist, Thursday, March 1, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery presents an exhibition of new sculptural works by Ulrike Palmbach.

Palmbach creates sculptural representations of commonplace objects and enigmatic groupings of animals that are illusory, unsettling and imbued with psychological intensity. These ambitious, life-scale works are meticulously hand sewn by the artist from soft materials such as surplus army blankets and muslin—emphasizing the inefficiency of the objects they imitate as they take on unknown properties and attributes. The materials often give these recognizable forms a spectral presence, allowing perception of them to fluctuate between being something and being nothing again. The tactile qualities of the works lure the viewer in, even as they provoke and ridicule expectations with absurdity and dark humor.

The exhibition is centered around two major works. *Hounds* is an installation of five ghost-like dogs, unsettlingly arranged as an anxious pack reacting to a presence felt but not seen. These animals, commonly associated with loyalty and devotion, assume a threatening air as they seek to expose the thing unseen. *Boat* is a sculptural recreation of a makeshift lifeboat, fabricated from a patchwork of flattened cardboard boxes. Upon close inspection, the material reveals itself to be not cardboard, but a handmade imitation, created by the artist from wood and tea-stained muslin, hand-sewn to bend and hinge like the faulty resource it represents. A symbol of a human emergency situation, *Boat* hangs suspended from the gallery ceiling, suggesting its existence in a dreamlike realm, offering a precarious illusion of safety.

Ulrike Palmbach was born in Sindelfingen, Germany, and received her BFA from San Francisco Art Institute. She recently was included among 75 international artists in the *T-Turin Triennial Threemuseums: The Pantagruel Syndrome* curated by Francesco Bonami and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in 2005-2006.

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, julie@wirtzgallery.com