

B L I S S

curated by Elfriede Dreyer

with the work of the internationally acclaimed Belgian artist **MARK CLOET** as well as Johannesburg artists **JACKI McINNES** and **JOHAN THOM**
Exhibition opens at 18h30 on **27 OCTOBER** and runs until **17 NOVEMBER 2007**

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MARK CLOET, *The Death of Jeanne Coucke Or The Silent Place*



Cloet presents memento mori bronze sculptures and drawings of the sculpture based on his experience of the death of a good friend, Jeanne Coucke. The subject wrapped her body in cloth and rags to alleviate her suffering, which the artist then cast after her death in remembrance of her.

The artist says: "... The Silent Place is the place where we don't talk anymore. The Silence Place is not a place, but the tension of the point from where one side of speaking is turning to another level of language: the silent place. Not because there is a topographic frame where we can indicate it, but because of this invisible place that is a 'topos', a rhetorical place, a place where language loses its form and disappears in its own body. A place that makes space for a language that doesn't exist because it doesn't have to exist. We could show such a silent place if she is not there, or even stronger, when she is not coming when she's invited. The mystery about this story, the mystery about this body is only mystery because of the words that are in the play."

Mark Cloet is an internationally acclaimed artist and one of Belgium's most prominent contemporary artists. He is a philosopher-artist who is guided and influenced by people as texts. Cloet has received many awards such as in 2005 an honorary doctorate from the Universities of Padova, Rome and Venice and has exhibited all over the world at in major events such as most of the international Art Fairs and twice at the Venice Biennale. Before living and working in 't Oud Klooster van Dikkele, Zwalm, Belgium, he is now resident in Ghent. Cloet does not limit himself to one medium, but uses drawing, lost wax, bronze, paint and found materials in his sculptural installations. In his subject matter he is eternally searching for the significance and function of objects through the deconstruction of original meanings as well as through displacing, reassembling and reconstructing objects.

JACKI McINNES

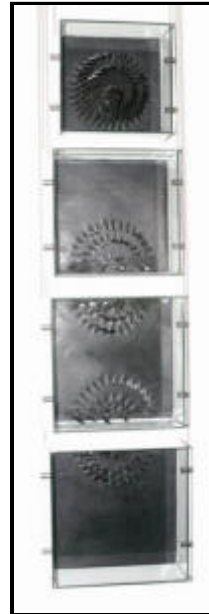
The artist says: "... I have chosen to interpret the idea of "Bliss" as that ill-defined liminal state somewhere between pleasure and pain; between beauty and the repugnant. My work seeks to operate in that space of conscious awareness where things can be perceived, discerned or sensed, but cannot be experienced in the real.

Disturbing imagery is visually conflated with the beauty of patterning, of the landscape and of the body. And in this way, my work seeks to cut to the level of our collective conscious in order to force our participation in those areas that we would prefer to ignore or suppress."

Jacki Mc Innes is an artist, arts writer and curator. She obtained a BA(FA) from UNISA in 2001 and a MFA from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT in 2004. She has staged a number of one-person exhibitions in Cape Town and Johannesburg and has participated in group exhibitions in South Africa and abroad. Mc Innes' art tends to focus on topics relating to women in society, especially with reference to domestic violence. Mc Innes is an assistant editor at David Krut Publishing, a publisher of books on contemporary South African art and artists and also writes on a freelance basis. She is currently cutting her curatorial teeth on a group exhibition where male artists offer their unique perspective on the topic of male-on-female violence. The exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery is to be staged in support of the global "16 Days of Activism" campaign against women and child abuse.



Jacki McInnes, *Cut I and II* (2006)





Jacki McInnes, *Worship* (2006)

JOHAN THOM

Johan Thom (b1976) is a full-time artist resident at the Fordsburg Artists Studios, Johannesburg, South Africa. He often uses video, sound and performance to explore the close link between the human being, their socio-political and economic environment and spirituality. His works are often confrontational and darkly humorous, terrorizing our sense of space, order and stability.

Thom has shown and participated in numerous exhibitions and art-projects at venues such as the First Canary Island Biennale (2006), Belgrade International Theatre Festival (2006), the Britto Arts Trust in Bangladesh (2006), the Rotterdam Film Festival (2006), the Venice Biennale (2003 & 2005), the CRIC/Pro Helvetia residency program in Switzerland (2004/5), the Ampersand Fellowship in New York (2005), the International Computer Arts Festival in Slovenia (2004) and various other arts festivals and group exhibitions in South Africa. He is a regular contributor to publications on contemporary art such as 'Art South Africa'. From 2001 - 2006 he lectured in African and South African art and contemporary critical theory at the Tshwane university of Technology before becoming a full time artist in 2007.



Ascension (2007)

A new video work, co-directed by Garreth Fradgley.



Johan Thom, *Looking for Lucy* (2007)



Johan Thom, *Molotovmammias* (2007)