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## **CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS PRESENTS**

### **LUTZ BACHER: SPILL**

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2008 – JANUARY 4, 2009**



Lutz Bacher, *Crash*, 2008, Vinyl window graphic, 12 x 32 feet. Courtesy of the artist and Taxter & Spengemann, New York.

St. Louis, MO —The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis is proud to present *Spill*, Lutz Bacher's first-ever solo exhibition in a major museum. The exhibition will run from September 12, 2008 to January 4, 2009.

On the occasion of this exhibition, Bacher creates a site-specific installation of new work, as well as a rotating display of recent and older pieces from the 1970s through 2007. As one part of a larger three-part project that also includes an artist-book and a second museum exhibition in New York, *Spill* is a fragmented collaboration that itself embodies the fractures, interruptions, and breakdowns that are central to Bacher's own works and process.

Since the 1970s, Bacher has developed a multi-faceted body of work that resists easy categorization and instead deliberately migrates between methods, styles, and attitudes. Rooted in a tradition of appropriation, she sifts through anonymous books, illustrations, pulp fiction, advertisements, self-help manuals, pornography, interviews, trade shows, and abandoned photographs. Making photocopies, hiring painters, shooting large-scale Polaroids, manipulating found TV footage, videotaping ambient walk- or drive-throughs, and always taking snapshots, Bacher searches for the noises that disfigure contemporary culture.

At the Contemporary, Bacher creates a site-specific installation that outlines her current artistic territory. The projection of a new, multi-channel video work, *Our Beloved Revolutionary Sweetheart*, dominates the Main Galleries, features an anthropomorphic line-drawing that moves over a pixilated, monochromatic landscape. A curved ramp intersects and dead-ends in the space, debris of shattered electric guitars litter a corner, and life-sized cardboard cut-outs of Star Trek characters stand nearby. On a wall wheat-pasted with enlarged photocopies is a rotating display of past works by Bacher. Presented for periods of a few weeks, each grouping provides glimpses—although interrupted, provisional, and partial—of the artist's overall practice. Among them are Bacher's collage of documents: *The Lee Harvey Oswald Interview* (1976), a selection of her infamous *Jokes* (1985-1988); her *Playboys* paintings (1991-93); appropriations of Gap ads (*Gap*, 2003-06), her Polaroids of plastic trolls, *Little People* (2005); and *Bien Hoa* (2007), found photographs taken by an American soldier in Vietnam. Inspired by Anheuser-Busch's headquarters in St. Louis, Bacher also fills a second space with stacks of Budweiser cases, which, along with an old Budweiser sign she collected years ago, threaten to transform the quiet gallery into a place of excessive intoxication. Outside, Bacher creates a sound installation triggered by motion sensors in the courtyard and covers the museum's windows with a billboard-sized photograph.

Via sound, video glitches, alcohol, and the ongoing removal and replacement of artworks, viewers experience various types of interferences. Like a shape-shifting living organism, *Spill* resembles the mind of an artist at work more than it does a conventional museum exhibition. The accompanying publication *SMOKE (Gets In Your Eyes)*, and published by Regency Arts Press, consists of photocopied photographs, letters, newspaper clippings, and email exchanges, and does not "catalogue" Bacher's artwork but rather emphasizes the erratic gestures, juxtaposed references, comic punch-lines, and sudden gear-shifts that exist in the experience of the exhibition itself. Fittingly, Bacher then offers a more traditional survey presentation of her 40-year career in the third part of her project, a monographic exhibition at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York entitled *My Secret Life*, scheduled to open in 2009.

*Lutz Bacher: Spill* is organized by Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis Chief Curator Anthony Huberman.

Support for *Lutz Bacher: Spill* has been generously provided by The Nimoy Foundation. General support for the Contemporary's exhibition program is generously provided by the Whitaker Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; William E. Weiss Foundation; Regional Arts Commission; Arts and Education Council; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; Nancy Reynolds and Dwyer Brown; and members of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Lutz Bacher has lived and worked in Berkeley, California since 1975. She worked closely with visionary gallerist Pat Hearn in New York throughout the 1990s, and later with American Fine Arts. In recent years, her group exhibitions have included *Closed Circuit*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; *Grey Flags*, SculptureCenter, New York and CAPC musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux; and *Defamation of Character*,

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York. Her galleries, Taxter & Spengemann in New York and Ratio 3 in San Francisco, have recently presented solo exhibitions.

### **CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS**

With a vision of presenting the most relevant and experimental developments in contemporary art and developing successful community partnerships, education programs and outreach initiatives, the Contemporary makes the arts available to wide and diverse audiences throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. Founded as the Forum for Contemporary Art in 1980, the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis re-opened with a new 25,000 square foot building in 2003.

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