

VANESSA BEECROFT

Opening: June 7, 2011

6.00 pm-8.30 pm VB70 performance – VB MARMÍ exhibition

Galleria Lia Rumma, Via Stilicone 19 – 20154 Milan

Gallery opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday 11.00 am-1.30 pm / 2.30 pm-7.00 pm

A double personal exhibition devoted to the work of the artist Vanessa Beecroft will be held in the Lia Rumma Galleries in Milan and Naples.

The Lia Rumma Gallery in Via Stilicone, Milan will host two events: VB70 and VB MARMÍ (works in marble). On the ground floor of the gallery, the performance VB70 will be given to mark the opening of the exhibition. About ten nude models, body-statues with slow, fragmented movements, will perform among marble bases, blocks of uncut stone and new sculptures depicting female bodies, creating a single, striking sculptural group. The relationship between the transitory nature of the performance - calibrated yet fleeting - and the polished stillness of the sculptures is the common thread that also runs through the latest events created by Vanessa Beecroft.

This turning point in her work is completely consistent with her previous projects which began in 2008 when, in the apse of the Church of the Spasimo in Palermo, 27 models covered in white mingled with 13 plaster casts, giving rise to a stunning *tableau vivant* imbued with icy pathos.

By pursuing this theme in her subsequent works with her customary attention to formal detail, this turning point marks a new formulation of the relationship with the history of art and its infinite wealth of beauty and evocative power.

Beecroft also conducts an acute investigation of the body, beauty and female identity. There is a lurking temptation to strike a celebratory note or to create an atmosphere of rhetorical monumentality due to the preciousness of the materials chosen for the performance. However, this risk is shattered by the painful incompleteness of the fragments, the assembly of the various marble inserts that virtually become a collage, and by the way the sculptures are perched, elegantly yet precariously, on the columns.

To complete the event, the upper floors of the gallery contain works in marble, fragments and busts in vivid colours. Sodalite blue, Macaubas sky blue, lapis lazuli, Rosa Portogallo (Portuguese pink marble), Belgian black, Statuary white, green onyx and French red ochre embody the intensity of the variations and chromatic choices with which the artist tinges all her refined backdrops.

A group of sculptures that forms part of the project entitled VB MARMÍ (VB Works in marble) will be presented from June 3 to November 27 at the Venice Biennale in the Tese dei Soppalchi, the new premises of the Italian Pavilion.

We would like to thank:

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VANESSA BEECROFT

Opening: June 9, 2011

7.00 pm VB66 - VB67

Galleria Lia Rumma, Via Vannella Gaetani 12 – 80121 Naples

Gallery opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday 11.00 am-1.30 pm / 2.30 pm-7.00 pm

The personal exhibition of Vanessa Beecroft's work in the Lia Rumma Gallery in Naples is to open only a few days after the exhibition devoted to the artist in Lia Rumma's Milan gallery. The heart of the exhibition will consist of three new sculptures, as well as the video projections VB66 and VB67, made by the artist in 2010 at the Mercato Ittico (fish market) in Naples and the Studi Nicoli in Carrara respectively, and her photographs, mainly large-scale works, taken from the first of the two performances.

In February last year, when Vanessa Beecroft performed VB66 at Palazzo Cosenza, the premises of the Naples Fish Market, in front of an enthusiastic and particularly numerous audience, the city was presented with a "transitory monument".

43 models painted entirely in black, 21 life-size plaster casts of women and about 60 anatomical fragments went to make up a complex composition that occupied the centre of the building on an unusual stage assembled from large marble tables and metal counters of the market. In a perfectly complementary combination of nature and artifice, the bodies and their doubles covered with a blanket of black proved to be a particularly effective way of raising the dramatic tone of the scene. They re-evoked the bronze statues of Herculaneum and the bodies discovered at Pompeii buried under the ash of the volcano, as well as the fragility of the body and its mutilations.

The comparison with the ancient world and its forms took on other shades of meaning and another fascinating guise in the works taken from the performance VB67. The event was part of the 14th International Biennial of Sculpture at Carrara. It was staged in the Studio Nicoli, one of the oldest marble workshops in the Tuscan city. The imposing plaster casts and the nude models created a representation of fragile and melancholic sacredness, where transient, fleeting beauty was the origin and outcome of every action. "The unnatural juxtaposition between the life and warmth of the models and the cold stillness of stone - says the artist - highlights the melancholy and fascination of sculpture".

Sculpture is the genre that the artist has recently been exploring and "redefining", together with performance art, in what has increasingly become an investigation and synthesis of the *terrain vague* that unites "the arts of time and the arts of space". Not unexpectedly, the videos of the two performances VB66 and VB67 are full of references to cinema: echoes of Pasolini's films emerge in the fixedness of the background of much of the framing, while atmospheres reminiscent of Antonioni's work appear in the uneasy and rarefied silences of the models.

The exhibition includes three new sculptures, part of the project VB MARMI, shown at the Gallery in Milan.

Vanessa Beecroft lives and works in Los Angeles. Her performances focus on the human body to which she manages to give symbolic meaning through the construction of precise choreography, creating "living paintings". In the last twenty years her works have been displayed at leading Italian and international art institutions including the following: Guggenheim Museum, New York (1998), São Paulo Art Biennial (2002); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin (2003); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2005); National Gallery, London (2006); PAC, Milan (2009); Mercato ittico (Fish market), Naples and the Carrara Biennale (2010), MMK Frankfurt (2010). She is one of the most eagerly awaited artists at the Italian Pavilion curated by Vittorio Sgarbi for the Venice Biennale in 2011. She has been invited to participate at the forthcoming PERFORMA Biennial, curated by Rosalee Goldberg, which will be held in New York next autumn.

