

Lumen Travo gallery presents

Lumen Travo gallery
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KATHE BURKHART

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From june 18th to july 12th

From wednesday to saturday 13-18
pm, sunday 14-17 pm

Lumen Travo gallery is pleased to present the new solo show of the American/Dutch well-known artist Kathe Burkhart, who is best known for her '*Liz Taylor Series*', that she has been working on for the past 25 years. A book documenting the series has been published this year by Regency Arts Press.

This body of work represents more than 150 photo-based drawings, paintings and prints. For her new exhibition, the artist presents an exceptional selection of large scale artworks from this series, coming specially from New York for their exhibition at the Center Montehermoso, in Vitoria (Spain), and a photograph from her new series '*Nude*'. Shaping the figure of the 'bad girl', a notion she initiated in the mid Eighties, Kathe Burkhart obsessively portrays Liz Taylor both in her private and public life. She turns the American actress into an icon of the female condition in Western World at the turn of the eighties until now. These graphic images reveal with humor the clash between women's sexual emancipation and their persisting stereotyping through the media and Hollywood films.

Both visual artist, performer and writer, she is the author of *Deux Poids Deux Mesures*, 2001 (ed. Hachette Littératures, Paris), *The double standard*, 2005 (Participant Press, NYC) and *Deux ames soeurs*, 2006, (Hachettes Littératures, Paris). As a 'cultural thinker', and professor at New York University, Kathe Burkhart plays with a subjective critical look to uncovering the interaction between the personal and the collective spheres and stressing out the resulting political resonances. '*Since no one is free of media influences in their personal lives, I choose emotionally extreme images. Foreign relations always mimic domestic ones*' explains the artist. Through a caricatural storytelling of Liz Taylor's/the artist's life, Kathe Burkhart refers both to cultural stereotypes about gender as well as intimate life. The use of slang phrases like 'Shit happens' or 'Up your ass' juxtaposed to seemingly erotic scenes creates touching and funny, not to say absurd, scenes that everyone can identify with. The text is a very important part of her work and adds sub-layers to the image, while rocking from popular language to intellectual references. Therefore, the mention 'Up your ass' from one of her paintings, refers to the title of the film Valerie Solanas wanted Andy Warhol to realize, before shooting him with a gun explaining that '*He had too much control over my life*'. Through her narrative images, Kathe Burkhart depicts the experiences of contemporary women, struggling for their rights and dreams in a patriarchal society. They are 'bad girls', both victims and rebels, both smart superactive wonderwomen and male fantasies.

Kathe Burkhart cleans up the idea of feminism through her corrosive gaze. According to her whether one is being fashionable or alternative, women have still to deal with a paradoxical situation in which the double standards that enforce the borders of gender in society are still under male directions, not unlike Big Brother.

Kathe Burkhart has had thirty solo exhibitions and installations, among them P.S.1/MoMA, 2007-2008, Alexander Gray Associates, 2006, Participant, Inc. 2003, and the Venice Biennale 1993. Her works are in the collections of John Waters, SMAK Museum, FlashArt Museum Trevi, Bianca Stigter, Amsterdam, Corinne Groot and Rob van de Ven, Amsterdam, among others.

Emilie Oursel