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STIR HEART, RINSE HEART: PIPILOTTI RIST

SFMOMA Announces First West Coast Solo Exhibition of Celebrated Video Artist

From March 6 through September 12, 2004, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present *Stir Heart, Rinse Heart: Pipilotti Rist*, the first solo exhibition on the West Coast of works by this celebrated Swiss video artist. Integrating performance, music, sculpture and video in unprecedented ways since 1988, Rist has established herself as one of the most acclaimed practitioners in her field. The exhibition will feature a newly commissioned multichannel video installation entitled *Stir Heart, Rinse Heart, 2004*, and two earlier works from the 1990s: *Hallo, guten Tag (Kussmund)* (Hello, Good Morning [Kissing mouth]), 1995; and *Selbstlos im Lavabad* (Selfless in the Bath of Lava), 1994. *Stir Heart, Rinse Heart: Pipilotti Rist* is organized by Benjamin Weil, SFMOMA curator of media arts.



Pipilotti Rist, *Selbstlos im Lavabad* (Selfless in the Bath of Lava), 1994; single-channel video installation; variable dimensions; Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth, and Luhring Augustine; © Pipilotti Rist

Drawing from diverse sources—contemporary video art, commercial film, self-appropriation and recycling of her own imagery—Rist is fluent in a visual language that exuberantly embraces aspects of mass media and experimental video, playfully confronting the high/low debate. Known for saturated colors, speed distortion, and sensual underwater shots, her work has been described as irresistible and hypnotic.

Architecture, time, and the role of video as an element of spatial installation are central to Rist's work. *Stir Heart, Rinse Heart, 2004*, explores light diffusion and scale, transforming static objects into animate screens. Objects drawn from the artist's ongoing *Innocent Collection*—an assemblage of containers, product packaging, and other items encountered daily but generally ignored—are suspended from the ceiling at various heights, functioning as miniscreens for multichannel video projection. Images of urban and rural landscapes from Rist's native Switzerland are layered over footage from inside the body, produced in collaboration with a team of doctors and utilizing medical technologies such as endoscopic cameras, ultrasound, and magnetic resonance. Viewers navigate the objects and sound components, immersing themselves in a three-dimensional environment and becoming part of

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the stage. This work is a special commission by SFMOMA and the Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean in Luxembourg.

Providing context for the artist's trajectory, a second gallery will feature two earlier video-sculptures. The ambiguous relationship between interiority and exteriority is the subject of *Hallo, guten Tag (Kussmund)* (Hello, Good Morning [Kissing Mouth]), a 1995 single-channel video installation with sound and objects. A close-up image



Pipilotti Rist, *Hallo, guten Tag (Kussmund)* (Hello, Good Morning [Kissing Mouth]), 1995; single-channel video object, ed 7/10; 15 ½ x 12 ¾ inches; Private Collection; © Pipilotti Rist

of the artist's mouth blows kisses from an LCD screen embedded in a bathroom-cabinet-sized mirror mounted on the wall at a height approximately opposite the viewer's mouth. Exemplifying Rist's inclination for creating a screen within a screen, or a space tucked away within a space, this work speaks to the human need for private interiors and secrets. It reimagines ordinary domestic space as an extension of mental landscape, illustrating the presence of fantasy even in the most practical activities.

Selbstlos im Lavabad (Selfless in the Bath of Lava) again recontextualizes the ubiquitous, television-like shape of the video monitor by placing it in an unexpected location. Like much of Rist's work, it is also seductively corporeal. This single-channel video installation comprises a video monitor visible through a hole in the gallery floorboards. A closer

examination reveals footage of the artist, nude and writhing in a pool of molten lava. On the soundtrack, Rist cries in German, French, Italian and English: "I am a worm and you are a flower. You would have done everything better. Help me. Excuse me."

Originally presented in a group exhibition at Basel, Switzerland, in 1994, *Selbstlos im Lavabad* was next installed in Zurich at the foot of a sculpture of the Madonna and Child, where it seemed to respond to religious notions of damnation. Later, installed in the floor of P.S.1 in New York, Rist's plea addressed the towering viewers who were forced to crouch in observation and acknowledge the eroticism of her predicament—tiny, nude and plaintive. Consistent with Rist's leaning toward the transitory nature of live performance, her work continually reinvents itself in each new space.

Rist was born in Rheintal, Switzerland. Zurich is currently her home base, though she spent 2002 as a visiting faculty member at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her work has been exhibited regularly in European museums and international biennials since 1988, but there have been few opportunities to see her work in the United States. Perhaps best known for her Public Art Fund commission *Open My Glade*, 2000, a series of one-minute videos that aired periodically between April and May of 2002 on screens over New York's Times Square, she also received the Premio 2000 award at the 1997 Venice Biennale and was a finalist the following year in the Guggenheim Museum's Hugo Boss Prize competition.

Rist conceives the video medium, in part, as a kind of equivalent to painting and often describes her work as "paintings behind glass that move." Her ironic, often mischievous sensibility questions the way we perceive the

moving image. As producer, director, and performer, Rist invents her own imaginary spaces that envelop the viewer like a compelling invitation to play voyeur to someone else's daydream.

Stir Heart, Rinse Heart: Pipilotti Rist is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Major funding has been provided by the James Family Foundation and New Art Trust. Additional support has been provided by Pro Helvetia Arts Council of Switzerland, Raoul and Patricia Kennedy, the Consulate General of Switzerland in San Francisco, Presence Switzerland, and swissnex.

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Hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; open late Thursdays until 9 p.m.; summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day) open at 10 a.m.; closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day. Koret Visitor Education Center open Thursdays 6 to 8:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$10; seniors \$7; students \$6. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings, 6 to 9 p.m., admission is half price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

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