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**press release**

**Julie Mehretu: Half A Shadow**

20. September - 01. November 2014

Opening: Friday, 19. September 2014, 6 - 10 pm

carlier | gebauer is very pleased to announce the second solo exhibition of new works by Julie Mehretu, opening September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, from 6-10pm. The new body of work featured in the exhibition includes a series of etchings, drawings on paper, paintings and three monumental works on canvas.

Evolving from her previous series, *Mogamma (2012)*, that used distinct architectural motifs as a metaphor for the unfolding socio-economic and political scenario of the Arab Spring, in *Half A Shadow* Mehretu delves further into the liminal 'third space', offering a more personal, contemplative, and pared down response to the aftermath of these events. The sharp lines and geometries of Mehretu's works are softened in this series, as she probes deeper into the visual language of abstraction; ghostly phantoms take shape within the mix of diffuse and staccato markings, invoking references to battle scenes, cave markings, historic jungles, urban walls, and digital clouds which co-exist like time travelers in an ancient multi-dimensional space. Combining her signature layers with looser brushstrokes and rhythmic, graffiti-like markings, she unveils and pursues a new language and space; softer sets of markings are left to flow over the canvas edge.

Mehretu sees the mark not only as an articulation of the 'spirit', but also as a form of 'agent' - a potential conduit and catalyst for change. In such dark times, when the chaos and frantic energy of war, social unrest, and environmental collapse feel omnipresent, how does the individual erase prescribed histories and project onto them new possibility?

Throughout this new body of work there is a sense of both distillation and disintegration. Familiar marks and blueprints, the overload of information, give way to a looser language of smudges, daubs, ancient markings, erasure; offering an impression of more intimate interior maps. The sense of personal agency and struggle in these new works is punctuated by moments, pauses, of sanctuary and release - a space of emergent potentiality. The works in *Half A Shadow* vibrate with a deep sonic energy, channeling not only Mehretu's own commanding voice but also a rich choral resonance.

With *Half A Shadow*, Mehretu finds vitality in the feeling of impending darkness. In this space, the individual and collective voices rise and fall together with vulnerabilities laid bare. The representative idea of an '*Invisible Sun*', from which the large-scale paintings take their name, is predicated on the basis that the actual sun also exists. Even the eclipse will come to pass.

Julie Mehretu was born in Addis Ababa in 1970 and lives and works in New York. She has exhibited in several important group exhibitions including 'Poetic Justice', 8th Istanbul Biennial (2003); Whitney Biennial; São Paulo Biennial and Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2004); Biennale of Sydney and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2006); Prospect 1, New Orleans (2008); 'Automatic Cities' MCA San Diego (2009); 'From Picasso to Julie Mehretu', British Museum, London (2010) and Documenta 13, Kassel (2012). Solo exhibitions include "Drawing into Painting" at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, the REDCAT, Los Angeles and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (2003); St Louis Art Museum (2005); "Black City" at MUSAC, Léon, Spain (2006), the Kunstverein Hannover and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark (2007); "City Sittings" at the Detroit Institute of Art and the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh (2008); "Grey Area" at the the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2009) and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2010).

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