

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIEWING ROOM

MAI-THU PERRET



30 NOVEMBER 2018 – 12 JANUARY 2019
PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY, 29 NOVEMBER, 6 – 8 PM

As part of its Viewing Room programme, Simon Lee Gallery is pleased to present a solo presentation of ceramic works by gallery artist Mai-Thu Perret. Known for her multi-disciplinary practice that engages installation, performance, sculpture, textile, and the written word, Perret derives inspiration from such avant-garde art movements of the twentieth-century as Dada, Constructivism and Bauhaus design, exploring the ways in which modernist form and artisanal genres, including craft, fashion and theatre, collide.

Since 1999 much of Perret's practice has developed around her invented narrative, *The Crystal Frontier*, which follows the progress of a group of women who form an autonomous commune in the remote desert of South Western New Mexico in an attempt to liberate themselves from the prohibitive parameters of capitalism and patriarchal convention. Since its inception, Perret's unique project has evolved across an array of media, all produced from the perspective of the commune's members. The artist's interest in ancient civilisation, feminist politics, literary texts and homemade craft has seen the creation of invented relics, blending traditional, artisanal and spiritual practices with a postmodern aesthetic.

Perret's ceramic wall reliefs are at once representational and abstract, morphing from geometric shapes into figurative forms found within the fictive universe of *The Crystal Frontier*, both quotidian – eggs, gates, heads of hair – and esoteric – ancient symbols and patterns that also occur within the modernist canon to illustrate universal themes. In this way the artist invokes the plastic nature of clay, a malleable material that loses its elasticity once it is fired in the kiln. Distinguished by their minimal compositions the ceramics nonetheless conjure a myriad of associative images, only enhanced by their lyrical titles, which recall 'capping phrases', an articulation of the experience of enlightenment in the tradition of Zen Buddhism. Designed to be illuminating but not necessarily explicative, these found fragments of verse underline the discrepancy between art objects and the language used to describe them, at the same time as encouraging the viewer to imagine the role and function of these sculptures within the context of the world of *The Crystal Frontier*.

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NOTES TO EDITORS**About Simon Lee Gallery**

Founded in Mayfair, London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices range from sculpture and painting to video and photography and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, helping to introduce its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme. In 2014, Simon Lee Gallery opened an office and private viewing space in New York. In 2017, this space was re-launched with an independent year-round programme of exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of emerging and established artists in dynamic group and solo exhibitions.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery
www.simonleegallery.com

About Mai-Thu Perret

Mai-Thu Perret was born in 1976 in Geneva, Switzerland and studied at Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK and the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York, NY. She is currently the subject of a major survey at MAMCO, Geneva, Switzerland and in 2019 will have a solo exhibition at Spike Island, Bristol, UK. In 2018 she was awarded the Paul Boesch Art Prize and was included in significant group exhibitions at The Met Breuer, New York, NY; The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT and Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland. Recent solo exhibitions include Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX (2016); Kunsthaus Aarau, Aarau, Switzerland (2011); MAMCO, Geneva, Switzerland (2011); Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland (2011); Le Magasin, Grenoble, France (2011); Theatre de l'Usine, Geneva, Switzerland, which travelled to Swiss Institute, New York, NY (2011); University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI (2010); The Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2009); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (2008); The Kitchen, New York, NY (2008) and The Renaissance Society, Chicago, IL (2006). In 2011 she took part in *ILLUMInations* at the 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, curated by Bice Curiger.

Image: Mai-Thu Perret, *Actually know your own mind*, 2016, Glazed ceramic, 37 x 48 x 7 cm (14 5/8 x 18 7/8 x 2 3/4 in.)

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