

Vera Mercer

Portraits and Still Lives

Press Preview:	Friday, March 5th, 2010, at 11 am
Opening:	Sunday, March 7th, 2010, at 12 am
	The artist will be present during both events
Exhibition:	March 7th – April 25th, 2010
Location:	Kommunale Galerie Berlin, Hohenzollerndamm 176, 10713 Berlin
Pressekontakt:	Nadine Dinter - public relations + art administration

Titled **Vera Mercer - Portraits and Still Lives** and as of **March 7th, 2010**, the Kommunale Galerie Berlin will be presenting photographs by the German-American artist Vera Mercer and thus, a sensual and surreal exhibition of its kind.

For the first time, Mercer's large-sized still lifes will be shown alongside with her intimate portraits of artists such as Andy Warhol, Marcel Duchamp and Niki de Saint-Phalle.

Although both subject matters do seem completely different at first sight, their intertwined character becomes more obvious once looking at it more closely. Both topics were inspired by the city of Paris where Vera Mertz (born in 1936 in Berlin) had moved after getting married to 'Eat-Art' founder Daniel Spoerri. As part of the Parisian Avantgarde movement, the photographer did not only document the actions and works by Jean Tinguely, Eva Aeppli, Daniel Spoerri and others, but also portrayed the artists themselves. Based on those close contacts and friendships, she took impressive and timeless black-white portraits, which do not only lack explicite posing but on the contrary reflect the essence of the moment.

It was again in Paris, more specifically during a visit to the former market halls, where self-taught photographer Vera Mercer discovered her favourite subject matter: food – fruits and vegetables, meat and fish – or dishes in their most originate and pure form. In order to compose her large-size still lifes, the photographer buys the ingredients from hunters, at flower shops and at the local vegetable, fruit or fish markets. Nevertheless, all arrangements are just done for and in front of the camera, may it be at the home studio in Omaha, Nebraska, or inside her studio-apartment, located in Paris' Quartier Latin.

But it's not only the objects which leave the viewer fascinated and enthralled, but also their way of depiction. While her still lifes captivate through their intense and highly saturated colours, Vera Mercer's flower arrangements and vegetable are surprisingly reduced in colour. Another important key to understanding and reading her photographs is the play with proportions. Thus, big subjects sometimes become small, tiny objects are shown on a much larger scale and natural ratios are sometimes ironically turned upside down.

Even though, Mercer's photographs measure up to 150 x 250 cm, the given frame seems to not provide enough room to accommodate the richness and potence of the capture motives. The macabre animal skull, dominating the work 'Naked Deer Head' symbolises in a quite undramatic way, the dead end of each existence. Accompanied by wilted flowers in the foreground, she offers a baroque scenery as well as a voluptuous grouping of classic vanitas-symbols, without ever touching decadent ground.

Given those facts, Vera Mercer's still lifes and flower photographs can be seen as bildgewordene Irritationen; with them, the artist positions herself far off any contemporary art trends and broadens our visual habits in an easy and casual way.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a bi-lingual (German/English) catalogue, published by Kehrer; 108 pages and 56 images, with a text by Matthias Harder

Opening hours: Kommunale Galerie Berlin, Hohenzollerndamm 176, 10713 Berlin, Germany

Tuesday – Friday, 10 am – 5 pm / Wednesday, 10 am – 7 pm // Sunday, 11 am – 5 pm

Additional shows:

From February 10th - March 20th, 2010 the Hamburg-based Flo Peters Gallery will be presenting a smaller selection of Vera Mercer's latest works, together with photographs by Christopher Makos and Paul Solberg.

Vera Mercer's flower photographs finally will be displayed at Photoplatz/Hotel Bogota (Schlüterstrasse 45, Berlin-Charlottenburg) from March 6th – April 27th, 2010. Accompanied with this show the book FLOWER POWER, edited by Matthias Harder at DUMONT, has been published. Among 31 other contemporary photographers Vera Mercer is part of it.

For further information, press images or a free catalogue **Vera Mercer - Photographs and Still Lifes**, please contact us at:

Nadine Dinter - public relations + art administration

Fasanenstraße 70, 10719 Berlin

Tel: +49 (0) 30 398 87 411

mobil: +49 (0) 151 123 70 951

email: presse@nadine-dinter.de