

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

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Lost Paradise

Diana Al-Hadid, Mathias Kessler, and Julião Sarmento

July 7- August 5, 2011

Everything dissolves, everything perishes, everything passes, only time goes on...
-Diderot

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Diana Al-Hadid, Mathias Kessler, and Julião Sarmento. The show's sculptures, photographs, paintings, and video explore the passage of time and the phenomenon of disintegration from art historical, architectural, ecological, economic, and personal perspectives. Through formal and thematic representations of ruin and decay, these pieces evoke nostalgia for both real and imagined histories.

Often drawing inspiration from the distant past or the far-off future, and sometimes a combination of the two, Diana Al-Hadid's sculptures frequently incorporate baroque architectural forms. She uses everyday materials, including cardboard, plaster, plywood, and resin, and in previous works has created seemingly impossible constructions that combine towers, cathedral spires, classical columns, and organ pipes. Her sprawling and intricate large-scale pieces exist in delicate equilibrium, balancing precise engineering with improvisational energy. Past pieces have taken mythological characters such as Ariadne, or historical figures like the 13th century-polymath Al-Jazari, as points of departure from which to launch their own narratives. For this new piece Al-Hadid moves away from these storylines to take a more formal approach. Translating strategies for rendering perspective in painting to the three dimensional realm of sculpture, Al-Hadid's newest work is at once monumental and ephemeral. Using a step pyramid form that prompts associations with Mayan ruins, the piece seems to be simultaneously coming together and flying apart, coalescing and dissipating, as it hovers in the main gallery. Negative space is essential to this work, and a sense of openness prevails, despite its size.

Mathias Kessler's panoramic photographs of Picher, Oklahoma mirror the open quality of Al-Hadid's sculpture. But what appears to be a bucolic Western landscape turns out to be a ghost town, abandoned due to the pollution caused by the lead and zinc mining industry. Kessler's poignant rendering of the ruined community and ecosystem includes archival aerial photos from the town's hall of records, documenting the population's decline. The series culminates in an image of the foundations of abandoned houses. Like a modern Pompeii, the footprints of these homes are the only remaining markers of a community that once thrived. In a video of footage of the landscape, taken from the window of a car, one of the town's last residents tells the story of the city's decline. Describing the community as he knew it, his narration contrasts with the emptiness of the passing surroundings.

The desire to recall and depict spaces once occupied is an essential thematic element of Julião Sarmento's paintings and drawings, as well. In the works installed here, from his *Women and Houses and Plants* series, 2009, Sarmento presents places he has known or lived, reproducing them with architectural precision in graphite as exterior views or floor plans, and often pairing them with photographs or drawings of flowers or figures. Like Al-Hadid's sculpture, Sarmento's paintings and drawings incorporate negative space. The expanses of painted white planes, or untouched paper in his paintings and drawings create both a physical and psychological boundary between the elements he juxtaposes. These negative spaces also allow for a kind of projection on the viewer's part, the opportunity to inject one's own nostalgia for dwellings past.

Based in Brooklyn, Diana Al-Hadid's upcoming solo exhibitions include a presentation in Murcia, Spain at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo in September of this year. Also in September, her

exhibition *Water Thief*, originally shown at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, will be on view at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, and in October a solo exhibition of her work will open at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas. Recent group shows include *One, Another*, The Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY, June 29- September 2, 2011; *Disquieting Muses*, Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki – State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece, June 23- September 4, 2011; *Run and Tell That! New work from New York*, Syracuse University Art Galleries, Syracuse, NY, November 9, 2010 –January 9, 2011; and *Art on Paper 2010: The 41st Exhibition*, Weatherspoon Art Museum, November 7, 2010- February 6, 2011; among others.

Mathias Kessler lives and works in Brooklyn. His exhibition *I'll Survive*, recently opened at the Rosphoto (National Museum for Photography Russia), St. Petersburg, Russia, and his show *After Nature*, at the GL Holtegaard Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark, is on view through October of this year. Recent group shows include, *Hoehenrausch 2*, OK Linz, Linz Austria, 2011; *Another Green World Carriage Trade*, New York, 2010; *Nowhere to Be Found*, Eikon Schaufenster, Museums Quartier, Vienna, Austria, 2010; and *Above and Beyond*, Forum Stadtpark, Graz, Austria, 2010; among others.

Based in Estoril, Portugal, Julião Sarmiento has exhibited internationally for the past 20 years. Upcoming shows include *Julião Sarmiento: Artists and Writers/House and Home (Part 2)*, CAC, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH, 2011; the first installment of this show, *Julião Sarmiento: Artists and Writers/House and Home*, which took place at the Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY recently closed. Notable recent exhibitions include *Distancias Cortas/Close Distances*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain, 2011 (solo); and *Julião Sarmiento: 2000-2010*, Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani, Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 2011 (solo), which traveled from CAC, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Málaga, Spain, 2010 (solo); among others.

Lost Paradise will be on view at the gallery's downtown space, 509 West 24th Street, through August 5. For further information please contact Claire Pauley at claire@marianneboeskygallery.com.