

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

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Press Release

Sue de Beer

The Quickening

November 30, 2006 to January 10, 2007

Opening reception November 29, 2006, 6-8 pm

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to announce a new video installation by Sue de Beer, entitled *The Quickening*. Set in the oppressive environment of Puritan New England ca. 1740 and drawing inspiration from the ecclesiastical texts of Jonathan Edwards, the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the Decadent writings of Joris-Karl Huysmans, de Beer has created a period film filtered through the gaze of a psychedelic lens. The video will be projected in the main gallery space, amongst a dropped ceiling, lush lighting and red carpeting. Typical of de Beer's video practice, the artist replicates portions of the sets in *The Quickening* to accompany the screening. Before entering the projection room, the viewer must first pass through a ring of trees over 13 feet in diameter. Integral to the film itself, the colored light filtering through the trees prepares the viewer to be transported and delivers him ready to engage with the film.

With *The Quickening*, Sue de Beer distances herself from her past fascination with the world of today's youth, so characteristic of her previous videos. Instead, 18th century Puritan America becomes de Beer's physical stage and inspires a wholly different culture to be mined. *The Quickening's* themes naturally involve female sexuality and the excitation and repression of sin. The narrative is seemingly simple enough: a young woman is stalked, violently attacked, and finally hanged. Recalling her past slasher-movie aesthetic, De Beer heightens the violence with frenetic camera movements and crystalline audio of knife to flesh, yet counters its dark shadows with rich jewel-toned greens and scarlets in its sets and costumes.

Layered upon the themes of sins of the flesh and their punishment, de Beer weaves another character into the video who sits entranced watching a dream machine before him, leaving the viewer to wonder where the reality of the narrative lies. Where Puritanism sought strict control over the members of its society, which de Beer highlights through a voiceover with excerpts from the theologian Jonathan Edwards' richly didactic sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741), the dream machine provides the very release from that control, freeing the mind from such constraints.

A catalogue will be published for the exhibition with essays by Kim Paice and Susan L. Abreth. *The Quickening* will be shown at Arnt and Partners, Berlin in 2007. De Beer's photographs will be included in "Into Me/ Out of Me," curated by Klaus Biesenbach at Kunst Werke, Berlin in November 2006, and she will also be included in "Between Two Deaths," curated by Ellen Blumenstein and Felix Ensslin, at the Zentrum fuer Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany, opening May 2007. Most recently, de Beer's work *Black Sun* was exhibited at the Whitney Museum at Altria in 2005.

Marianne Boesky Gallery is located at 509 West 24th Street, between 10th and 11th Avenues. Our hours are Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 6pm. For further information or images, please contact Elisabeth Ivers at 212-680-9889 or lis@marianneboeskygallery.com.