

HEIDI WOOD

THE MEYMAC PYRE OR JUST-IN-TIME DELIVERY

Residency program (March – April 2009) and exhibition (April 18 – June 15 2009)

Contemporary Art Center, Abbaye Saint André, Meymac

In the service provided by Heidi Wood, the painting, set in a given environment, functions as an *image*. By insisting precisely on this image effect, the symbolic crystallization of an ideal occurs; the extreme enhancement of volatile appearances confers on the Heidi Wood suggestion the precariousness and evocative power of her intention in that it obliterates all trace of painting.

The context generates and justifies the motif (alias the painting) and vice versa. The artwork reveals itself in this intermittent and specific inter-dependency. This is precisely what interests the artist, who has no illusions about the autonomy of the painted object, and even less concerning the timelessness of the context. As a result, in the case of a painting shown, she is interested only in the impact of its presentation. In painting, she focuses on the signal, rather than the sign.

Heidi Wood works as a service provider in a wide range of contexts: industrial, urban, domestic, commercial, etc. She takes on the job of making images under contract and for her brand name. In her undertaking, the painting's value is only that of a motif. As an object, it submits to the rules of usage required to meet the quality standards of the service she provides. Its life expectancy is limited. Unless it is spared by acquisition, it remains valid for five years. The artwork's material aspects are only intermittent simulations. The motif, however, is stored in memory and can be reactivated at any time.

In light of the above, during her residency at the Meymac abbey she has programmed a pyre for twenty-one of her paintings from 2002 and 2003. They have all featured in specific projects (*Cristal Union* in 2002, *Planète magique* in 2003, etc.). Far from any desire to provoke or generate controversy, this act is a fulfillment. Like a business run on the principle of just-in-time delivery, the artist manages her stocks by disposing of those that have not been sold. But the act acquires symbolic value, so the performance modalities are thought through in great detail, much like her installations. In the current context of overproduction that seems necessary to the fragile balance of economies, this iconoclastic gesture should be seen in its true light as a signal.

Philippe Coubertergues, March 2009

Translated from French

Postscript

Faced with the difficulties of organizing this "pyre" and the realization that the paintings contain polyester and lead, so they risk giving off a toxic cloud if burnt, the paintings will be destroyed at the end of the exhibition in a less spectacular manner.