

# HEIDI WOOD

## **HEIDI WOOD à la Planète magique**

Galerie Anne Barrault

3 June – 12 July 2003

For her first solo show at the Anne Barrault Gallery, Heidi Wood went to the Planète Magique, a long abandoned amusement park set up in the former Gaité Lyrique Theater. After starting out as a painter, for several years now this artist has been exploring the conjunctions between art and decoration through the subtle interplay of her paintings and the environment in which they are represented in her photos. She photographs her canvases in various kinds of settings. As she likes to put it, the photos are “spin-offs” of her core project, painting.

Wood puts her canvases in places that are often stereotyped, like the displays in home decoration shows, whose clean and cold catalogue aesthetics she explicitly strives to emulate. This frozen atmosphere emphasizes the composition, whose assortment of elements with each other seem just right and go with each other perfectly, whether the canvases hung on large-motif wallpaper above the Formica furniture of a suburban middle class household of the 1970s in *La maison de banlieue (The House in the Suburbs)*, or the canvases arranged into a pattern transforming the Cristal Union production facility.

Each of these works is presented as a *Serving Suggestion*, a visual strategy that seeks to socialize her art by inserting it into a domestic habitat. Always presented in a particular environment, the raison d'être of these paintings (often in series of two or three) is to blend into the background and become a suitable part of a well-mannered ensemble. Wood herself plays with the apparent conformism of her painting by systematically using forms so simplified they are practically pictograms or urban signage.

In this new work served up in the ruins of an attraction park, the flat-colored canvases conceived to fit into this place integrate themselves into it rather than melting into it. From the color of the stairs to the wall molding, and from the no-smoking sign to the carpet, each of Wood's geometric canvases is in formal accord with a prematurely aged 1980s decorum. This ghostly magic put together with the logical application of conventional taste results in a transformation and these disparate rooms in the end attain a certain magnificence. Wood photographs the symphony – in other words, what she shows us could be one note, one color, understood as intention and orchestration.

## **Raya Baudinet**

Translation, L-S Torgoff

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