

HEIDI WOOD

Heidi Wood, *Use-by Date*

Galerie Anne Barrault

22 rue Saint Claude, F – 75003 Paris, France

18 October 2008 – 20 December 2008

LANGUAGE OF BRANDING, SYSTEMS OF SIGNS

Heidi Wood's work is deceptively simple. Consisting of duochrome paintings of bright colors and very clean lines, her style may look elementary: an abstracted motif set against a sharply contrasting background. The motifs appear familiar; we trick ourselves into thinking we've seen them somewhere before, in an instruction manual, on a road sign or the logo of a space academy, but they rest in a space somewhere in between, vaguely reminiscent and ambiguously recognizable. It's oddly comforting to be surrounded by these icons, these logos for non-existent products and services, for this is the stuff we are surrounded with in a day to day setting, the steady stream of signs and symbols from the machines of marketing and consumption.

Heidi Wood's work tackles the strategies and methods of marketing and branding one by one. It's an exhaustive investigation. Some of the most thought-provoking pieces are the diptychs in the Authentic New Mexico series, where Wood creates angular, reductive mascots, modeled after the Hopi Kachina dolls, set next to photographs of the Santa Fe-style architecture, imposed by law on all buildings in that area of the country, making an uneasy statement about the concept of authenticity and the overlap into branding.

This exhibition, *Use By Date*, her third at Galerie Anne Barrault, offers the rare chance to see a broad survey of her projects as she exhibits some of her past work. The gallery will take on the air of a showroom as works in the exhibition will rotate weekly. The artist states that every piece has a use-by date, set at five years from now. Unless they are «spared through acquisition» all of these works will expire in five years and be systematically destroyed. So stop in today and come often! And yes, there's a catalogue. We recommend you pick it up, at least to browse through it in the gallery. It gives a great overview on Heidi Wood's very comprehensive exploration into the motives of marketing and the creation of brand icons-- not simple stuff in the least.

Natalie Hegert, 19/10/08

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