

JUTTA KOETHER

Lux Interior

April 26 – May 24, 2009

Lux Interior is an exhibition of a single painting by Jutta Koether. Installed on its own wall, with one foot on the stage and one foot off, *Hot Rod (after Poussin)*, 2009 – the artist's to-scale remake of Poussin's *Landscape with Pyramus and Thisbe*, 1651 – receives extra illumination from a vintage scoop light (salvaged from The Saint, an ex-Manhattan night club). The painting's mostly red palette relates the bloody double suicide in a fable by Ovid (according to which the lovers' tragedy changes the mulberry tree's blossoms from white to purple) while inflicting the scene with a lightning storm. Along with the depicted drama, metallic and iridescent pigments disturb the idealized vista. Koether's "harsh pastoral" and the diagonally broken staging of the work re-enact the horror of tragic miscommunication between two lovers so that Poussin's allegorical landscape returns as a raw, stripped-down, messed-up and overdosed surface. Here, the sight of death is a seeing-red and a going blind.

Koether's practice has often involved appropriations and distortions of male masters such as Manet and Cézanne. Her recent encounter with Poussin – via T.J. Clark's study *The Sight of Death* – has evolved into an experimental movement between reading and painting, an exploration of the relations between language and pictures (and their reciprocal mistreatments of each other). Accompanying the exhibition's single painting is an archive compiled by the artist, a sort of extended footnote comprising her readings on the reintroduction of Poussin into modern art historical interpretation, preparatory sketches made while planning the exhibition, and song lyrics by The Cramps (the exhibition is named after the horror-punk band's front man who passed away this February).

Elaborating a correspondence between the landscape genre and the idea of the stage, between painting and display, *Lux Interior* also references previous one-painting shows by Koether: the dialogically-structured exhibition *The Inside Job* (1991), and *koether- need change unseen nightlong new york interior construction of mediality of painting* (2001-2002), a series of by-appointment viewings of a single work in the artist's apartment. Poussin's painting was made for a specific client, Cassiano dal Pozzo, for a specific room in his estate, and with a particular discussion in mind. For *Lux Interior*, Koether has scheduled three separate talks in the gallery. *Hot Rod (after Poussin)* stages both the promise of intimate communication and the menace of terrible miscommunication in a space where a particular history has been shared.

ACTS:

1. *How to Represent a Storm*
Sunday April 26, 4pm
2. *Painting without Art*
Saturday May 2, 4pm
3. *The staging of restricted means in the landscape redefines the terms of pleasure of painting...*
Sunday May 3, 4pm

Gallery hours: Thursday through Sunday, noon to 6pm