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Gallery Opening hours:
12 - 18:00 Friday to Sunday
or by appointment

PRESS RELEASE

Suzanne Treister: MTB [Military Training Base]

Friday November 13th – Sunday December 13th 2009

Private View: Friday November 13th, 2009 6pm - 9pm

Alma Enterprises is proud to present **MTB [Military Training Base]** a solo show by artist **Suzanne Treister**. MTB will transform Alma Enterprises into a temporary showroom presenting designs and ideas for a hypothetical military training base of the future.

MTBs generally house military equipment and personnel, and are the sites of training and operations. Bases are usually extra-legal jurisdictions not subject to civil law. They can range from small outposts to military cities and may belong to a different nation or state than the surrounding territory.

The project closely adheres to Alma's new manifesto and Treister will spend a month as resident at Alma Enterprises creating MTB as a vast diagrammatic drawing that will entirely cover the back and side walls of the gallery space. In the installation there will also be three video training demos.

MTB draws in part on the methodology of the role-playing simulated architectural/landscaped war zone as a military training ground, eg. The Mojave Viper Training Program located in the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, CA, USA.

MTB also references the idealistic theories and proposals for non-lethal warfare of Jim Channon and the 'First Earth Battalion'. Channon's book of the same name was self-published in 1979 in California.

MTB draws together a web of histories and projections for the future, suggesting hypothetical scenarios for alternative military training.

Detailed text on the MTB designs presented will be available to download from our website.

A limited edition print will also be available for sale and on our website

MTB [MILITARY TRAINING BASE]

Suzanne Treister's *MTB* installation outlines a landscape where military operations have shifted from the edifices that we usually identify as theirs - fortifications barracks and training bases - to occupy other buildings and organisations normally considered to be outside, if not opposed to, the dictates and logics of armed offense and defence – archaeological sites, museums, gardens and Academies, the constructions of culture. We also discover other, rather stranger architectures and organisations in the cartographic landscape painstakingly delineated on the wall in front of us, buildings that house 'global consciousness projects' and training modules for Jim Channon's 'First Earth Battalion' project', the 'Institute of Militronics and Advanced Time Interventionality', and a museum of sex.

Were it not for these more fantastical architectures we would read Treister's installation in terms of the reach of the 'Military Industrial Complex' (beloved of oppositional critique of the sixties and seventies) into our everyday world, especially the presence of IBM, Halliburton and KBR buildings. But the presence of other hallucinatory constructions un-anchors this simple political reading to float us into stranger and more complex spheres that imply that the drawing in front of us is mapping subjective worlds as much as an objective one, and furthermore one that might lie in a (delusional) future. It becomes something fantastic, a fiction, like a novel, a computer or role-playing game.

John Gray talks of war in terms of *play*, and locates *play* as lying outside the rationalist agendas of aspiration and improvement. In Homeric Greek, he points out, the word *agon* signifies the rivalry of sport and the mortal combat of war. Both were games and, save for the glory that came with triumph or death, neither had an end beyond itself. Artistic and cultural production is often seen as somehow operating in terms of 'play' and Treister's work here overlays and combines these possible expressions.

This dark convergence is given additional resonance in the work through the illustrational, hand-drawn quality of the landscape, recalling pre-Renaissance paintings, maps found in fantasy books such as 'Lord of the Rings' as well as the detailed worlds that often constitute outsider readings and descriptions of the universe. These narratives are analogous to the digital spaces that increasingly generate and describe our contemporary (and future) universes: actual and imagined, and which constitute the Virtual (a realm that increasingly seeps into what we might consider as actual). Coincidentally Treister's Installation opens to the public in the same week that the immersive 'first person shooter' computer game 'Call of Duty; Modern Warfare 2' was launched, a war and terrorist game described by the Guardian Newspaper as 'an epic that take the games industry to a new level'. It was launched in a Leicester Square Cinema complete with cast members walking down a carpet mobbed by paparazzi.

The works invites us to consider how such complex contemporary worlds are dependent on the platforms of technology, developed from, and central to, the operations of modern Military State. However it also suggests worlds against which such technological resourcing (increasingly) has little or no agency, those that are generated and exist in the realms of the personal and subjective, the visionary, the mystical, the theological and the revealed.

Richard Grayson 2009

Biography

Suzanne Treister (b.1958 London) studied at St Martin's School of Art and Chelsea College of Art and Design and is now based in London having lived in Australia, New York and Berlin. Primarily a painter through the 1980s, Treister was a pioneer in the digital/new media/web based field from the beginning of the 1990s, developing fictional worlds and international collaborative organisations. Treister's practice deals with notions of identity, history, power and the hallucinatory. It explores how we make sense of history and the politics of war. Her investigations into the life and research of the fictional character Rosalind Brodsky, most recently manifested in the project, *HEXEN 2039*, were described by *Art in America* as 'One of the most sustained fantasy trips of contemporary art'. Recent projects include: *NATO*, *Alchemy*, *CORRESPONDENCE: From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe*, *War Artists*, *PSI_NET*.

URL: <http://www.suzannetreister.net>

Recent exhibitions include:

Annely Juda Fine Art, London; P.P.O.W, New York, USA; Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin; New Art Gallery, Walsall; Kunstverein Langenhagen, Germany; Skolská 28, Prague; Galerie Lorenz, Frankfurt, Germany; Alma Enterprises, London; Hartware MedienKunstVerein (HMKV), Dortmund, Germany; The Jewish Museum, New York, USA; Le Plateau, FRAC Paris, Ile de France; Museum of Contemporary Art Bordeaux (CAPC), France; Temporary Kunsthalle, Berlin, Germany.

Recent publications include:

HEXEN 2039 new military-occult technologies for psychological warfare, Black Dog Publishing, London, 2006

NATO The Military Codification System for the Ordering of Everything in the World, Black Dog Publishing, London, 2008