

Press release

Carmen Perrin

Exhibition from 18th May to 12th August 2006

Carmen Perrin was born in 1953 in La Paz, Bolivia. Professor at the Geneva School of Fine Arts from 1988 to 2004, she also worked in Marseille (1986-1996) and London (1993-1995) before returning to Geneva this year. In addition to numerous exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad, she regularly carries out permanent interventions in collaboration with architects in public places, such as at the Bains des Pâquis in Geneva (2005) or at Zürich-Kloten airport (2002). Galerie Guy Bärtschi is pleased to present the work of this artist for the first time, and will publish a catalogue with a preface by Hervé Gauville and Carmen Perrin.

Carmen Perrin's work has from its beginnings been situated outside the traditional plastic categories, beyond the material limits of the work or the studio. For her, a sculpture is more like an "event", a confrontation of her own body with the elasticity of materials, most often industrial; an installation in a public space represents a way of "marking space", of activating forces which, by their cohesion or their opposition, bring to light the precarious balance of any situation, any place, and any form. These questions lead Carmen Perrin to intervene often in public spaces to produce art that is more socially responsible and accessible to a wider public.

The new works presented here are in line with this approach. Lead pencil drawings, for example, make visible the gestures tirelessly repeated by the artist. These tracings are superimposed to flatten the thickness of the paper to the point of almost tearing it, thus eventually deforming its surface, giving it an undulating and organic volume. Other works enter in direct relation with the public: transforming according to the viewer's angle of vision, polycarbonate paintings reveal colours, messages or motifs, whose meaning is triggered by the viewer.

Several installations, finally, embody the tension between resistance and fragility. Covered with nails, the eggshells in *La distance* juste evoke sea urchins, hedgehogs or mines ready to explode; the chairs used in *Espace éponge*, for their part, have been stripped of almost all their material to leave only a skeleton, a precarious structure whose fragile balance is in total contradiction with their primary utilitarian function.