

The intimate and extraordinary life of rocks
Mai Hofstad Gunnes, Setareh Shahbazi, Eve K. Tremblay

May 8 – June 14

opening: Thursday, May 8, 2008. 7pm.

the intimate and extraordinary life of rocks

"There exists a secret affinity between certain images; it holds equally for the objects represented by these images." René Magritte

In *The intimate and extraordinary life of rocks*, Mai Hofstad Gunnes, Setareh Shahbazi, and Eve K. Tremblay take a basic unit of architecture—the rock—as a poetic element with which to combine personal and literary narratives through image, collage, video, and installation. Using discrete narrative units to reveal moments of coincidence, parallelism, and disclosure, the gallery space becomes a receptacle – a space for both collecting and rearranging loose elements of the artists' stories. Like Fernand Pouillon's historical novel *The Stones of the Abbey*—in which the stone by stone construction of a 12th century church metaphorically provides the formal structure of the text – the three artists will present works that have evolved through study of rocks and geology.

Perhaps the most fecund conceptual overlap between architecture and narrative is the importance of structure. The arrangement of related elements into something not only cohesive, but also stable, provides the foundation from which both architectural and narrative forms can take shape. The merging of these structures introduces a new tension into the framework of both architecture and narrative. Is the stability of stone weakened by the fluidity of thought? How can the shape of a story define the form of a space? What we find in testing this idea through exhibition is that space—both architectural and nontangible narrative spaces—are linked by a dependence on personal, physical experience. In the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), we follow Poliphilo as he moves through various architectural contexts that bring about the development of a personal narrative – his exploration of both types of space becomes the method for his self-discovery.

And yet by focusing on the basic unit of narrative and narrative-building, Gunnes, Shahbazi and Tremblay are further able to penetrate what one might consider the picturesque surface of the completed story—the façade its architectural cognate—by daring to address the fragment. The rock, the individualized unit, often lives beyond the climax of its fully built superstructure, weathering time in the decaying forms of the archaic—the ruins that continue to make plain the beauty of the vanishing.

During the exhibition the artists will organize a weekend of activities including a story-telling round table and a field trip that will bring together practitioners from various artistic and scientific disciplines. The intimate and extraordinary life of rocks will culminate in a publication of the collected narratives that take shape over the course of the exhibition.

about the artists

Mai Hofstad Gunnes was born in Lørenskog, Norway in 1977. She currently lives and works in Berlin. She obtained her MFA from Trondheim Academy of Fine Arts, Norway, in 2004. In 2003 she participated in a nine-month Research Program in contemporary art at the Center for Contemporary Art, CCA, Kitakyushu, Japan. Solo exhibitions include *Stolen Recorder*, (with Lieko Shiga) Areal 28, Berlin, 2006, Taka Ishii Gallery (with Christine Rebet), Tokyo, 2005 and *What do you mean?* Fylkingen, Stockholm, 2004. Recent group exhibitions include: *Ghost in the Machine*, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo, 2008, *Inter-Faces*, Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2007, *Temporary Art Museum Soi Sabai*, Bangkok, Thailand, 2006, *Domestic Affairs*, Momentum 2006, Moss, Norway, 2006, *On time*, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway, 2005, and *All Moveable Wonders*, IASPIS Gallery, Stockholm, 2004.

Setareh Shahbazi was born in Tehran/Iran in 1978 and moved to Germany in 1985. From 1997 to 2003 she studied Scenography and Media Arts at the Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe. With the support of a DAAD Scholarship, she spent one year in Beirut, Lebanon, where she worked on the project „Oh, no, no... – The Crystal Series“ in cooperation with the Arab Image Foundation. Her solo exhibitions were held at Karlsruher Kunstverein in 2004, Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Hamburg and Montgomery, Berlin in 2006 and at the Contemporary Arts Forum, St. Barbara in March 2008. Setareh Shahbazi has participated in various groupshows, including „Whenever it starts, it is the right time!“ at Frankfurter Kunstverein, „Rainbow“ at Galerie Sfeir-Semler Beirut, „J'en rêve“ at Fondation Cartier in Paris and „Iranian Pool“ at Rooseum in Malmö. She lives and works in Berlin, but dreams of moving to LA.

Eve K. Tremblay is a Montreal artist now based in Berlin. Her work is exhibited this spring at The Centre d'Art Contemporain de Meymac in France and the National Museum of Fine Art of Quebec in Quebec city. Her work is represented by Galerie Donald Browne in Montreal and by the BUIA Gallery in NYC where she recently showed in a solo her ongoing project *Becoming Fanhenreit 451*. Her works have been published in *Parachute*, *Springerin*, *Art Forum*, and other publications. Upcoming projects include *Quebec Gold* in Reims, France and *The Waterpod* in NYC.

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