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Contact: Lia Gangitano, 917 488 0185

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RACHEL LOWTHER
CASTLE SPIKE

November 2 - December 14, 2003

Opening Reception and Performance by the Condor Moments
Sunday, November 2, 2003, 7-9pm

*If the bomb does drop, I want to be pissed out of my mind and
straight underneath it when it comes.*

-*Threads* (1984, directed by Mick Jackson, written by Barry Hines)

From November 2 - December 14, 2003, PARTICIPANT INC will present *CASTLE SPIKE*, a solo exhibition by RACHEL LOWTHER. This large-scale sculptural installation, whose title and themes are derived from the 1984 film, *Threads*--"a dramatization of the probable consequences of a full-scale nuclear war on an English community"--will also include wall drawings by Fritz Welch and music by The Condor Moments.

Lowther's sculptural tableaux characteristically mix elements such as hard and soft, virility and delicacy, "secret poison [and] out and out carnage."* Recent works deploy such contradictions to examine masculinity and related violence. Creating a space that is poised--neither coming together nor falling apart--her work reiterates, from the present moment, the formative impact of Cold War warnings on a generation now grappling with *deja vu*.

Like the reverse energy described in Lowther's drawings, her arrangement of sculptural works suggests "the unsettling quality of disarranged, interrupted time where landscape and event are conflated; [her works] are immersed in the disassociated space of trauma and find their power in it." Central to the installation is a new large-scale work, cast in rubber and comprised of numerous drummers' arms (including members of The Condor Moments, Spunk Lads, psi, and the Dying Light)--linked together but not necessarily united. This organic form--a morphing Goya-esque tree with outstretched branches and tentacular forms by English artist, Alex Bagdaley--spreads itself about the space, incorporating one or more non-functioning projectile machines.

Close interpretations of the film, *Threads*, glean works such as wall drawings of withered crops and downed power lines, emblematic of *Castle Spike*. In the visual communication of survivors--whose loss of language is impending--*Castle Spike* refers to the altered post-apocalyptic landscape depicted in the film. Wall drawings by Fritz Welch emanate from an improvised excerpt of *Damnation Road*, performed by dancer/choreographer Miguel Gutierrez. His movements, representing the body in terror, are evidenced by stains left by applied pigment along the perimeter of the space.

Also derived from *Threads* is a small-scale light-emanating sculpture made of flashlights and melted milk bottles--whose explosion signaled the beginning of the end. These works are allied with Lowther's own misremembered articulations--nightmarish sculptural interpretations of masculine ideals gone wrong.

"The recurring presence of birds" in Lowther's work, rendered in shiny monochromatic resin, here, takes the shape of *The Pelican*, an omnipresent bird with huge gaping maw. Defying the hardness that her chosen material implies, its flaccid pouch summons both maternal gatherer and powerless father.

Also included will be a video projection, manipulated footage from *Threads* in which a young boy plays with a toy fighter plane. Musician, Richy Midnight, the artist's brother, composed the sound component. His collaboration will also be manifested in a black icosahedron object, designed by Lowther to function as a customized piano stool for his live performance during the opening of the exhibition. This sculpture will remain on view, together with Midnight's rhinestoned pants.

*This and subsequent quotations from Aline Duriand, "I Write My Friend; Rachel Lowther: Momenta Art" *Zing Magazine*, vol. 3, autumn 1999.

Threads description, IMDb.com.

Born in Lancashire, England, Rachel Lowther lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She has shown nationally and internationally, including PR17, Berlin; Emily Tsingou Gallery, London; Gallery Lombardi, Austin, TX; Sculpture Center, NY; Citylights, Melbourne; Maschenmode, Berlin; Kunstlerhaus Mousonturm, Frankfurt; Rupert Goldsworthy, NY; The Harlem Flophouse, NY; Atlanta Contemporary Art Center; Sara Meltzer Gallery, NY; Thread Waxing Space, NY; Bellwether, Brooklyn; The Hudson River Museum, NY; Momenta Art, Brooklyn; Bronwyn Keenan Gallery, NY; The Approach, London; and Chamber, NY.

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 95 Rivington Street, between Ludlow and Orchard Streets in the Lower East Side.

Gallery hours: Wednesday-Sunday, 12-7pm.