

Lia Halloran

Sublimation | Transmutation

Opening reception: Saturday, May 5, 2012 from 6 to 8pm

May 5 – June 16, 2012

Martha Otero Gallery presents a solo exhibition from Lia Halloran, *Sublimation | Transmutation*.

With a devoted interest in physics, chemistry and the behavior of natural elements in the guise of contemporary art practices, Lia Halloran stages her solo exhibition *Sublimation* as a simultaneous investigation into the human form and the passage of time, where flesh undergoes a metamorphosis into crystallized figures.

The active process for Halloran begins less at the moment her hand applies the ink to the medium and more when the ink remarkably self-animates and migrates over the surface. What begins as a dual depiction of close friends used as live models and crystalline forms becomes a performance; the unpredictable nature of the heavy blue ink acts upon and within the smooth, oily paper. Halloran describes this work as a 'negotiation' between the medium, engaging in a game of action and reaction via ink pen, creating an image fluctuating between strict representation, the intangible object and the inherent fluidity of the medium.

Halloran will also show a unique incarnation of the Periodic Table of Elements, re-interpreting and combining figures into various chemical states of the 118 elements. These flourishing visuals, presented in the same layout as the classic Table, serve as capsules of potential energy. In Halloran's research of the dynamic form of chemicals, gases and metals, she harness explosive moment and inertia together in her subjects; some fully realized as human figures, other camouflaged into the hardened natural elements, themselves, manifesting a kind of dormant but sensually charged aesthetic dialogue.

J.G. Ballard's 1966 novel, *The Crystal World*, depicts the crystallization of a forest and its biosphere after being infected by a virus. This serves as a significant reference for Halloran:

...I was prepared for the transformation of the forest- the crystalline trees

Martha Otero

hanging like icons in those luminous caverns, the jeweled casements of the leaves overhead, fused into a lattice of prisms, through which the sun shone in a thousand rainbows, the birds and crocodiles frozen into grotesque postures like heraldic beasts carved from jade and quartz-...what was really remarkable was the extent to which I accepted all these wonders as part of the natural order of things, part of the inward pattern of the universe...perhaps an archaic memory we are born with of some ancestral paradise where the unity of time and space is the signature of every leaf and flower. It's obvious to everyone now that in the forest life and death have a different meaning from that in our lack-lustre world. Here we have always associated movement with life and the passage of time, but from my experience...I know that all motion leads inevitably to death, and that time is its servant.

Lia Halloran was born in Chicago in 1977. She spent one year at the Studio Art Centers International in Florence, Italy before receiving her BFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1999. She went on to receive her MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University in 2001. Solo exhibitions of Halloran's work have been held at venues in New York, Miami, Boston, London and Los Angeles. Halloran was recently featured in the group exhibition Haunted: Contemporary Photography/ Video/ Performance at the Guggenheim Bilbao and The Rise of RAD: Contemporary Art and the Influence of the Urethane Revolution at the Torrance Art Museum in Torrance, California. Halloran's work has been featured in publications including The Village Voice, The New Yorker, The New York Times, The Boston Globe, The Los Angeles Times and NY Magazine. Sublimation | Transmutation is Halloran's first solo exhibition with the Martha Otero Gallery. Halloran lives and works in Los Angeles and currently serves as Assistant Professor of Art at Chapman University in Orange, California.

For further information, please contact Julie Machado at 323.951.1068 or visit our website www.marthaotero.com