

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Falling Angels

February 13-March 15

Opening Reception Thursday, February 13, 6-8pm

The Greene Naftali Gallery is pleased to present "Falling Angels," an exhibition of works by eight female artists currently working in Germany including Monika Baer, Laura Horelli, Helena Huneke, Dani Jakob, Katja Strunz, Paloma Varga Weisz, Katharina Wulff and Amelie von Wulffen. The exhibition will be on view from February 13-March 15, 2003.

"Falling Angels" seeks to highlight a new romantic sensibility emerging from Germany and to present works by women artists, many of whom are exhibiting for the first time in the United States. The exhibition will include painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, and performance. Seen together, such works point to what critic Anke Kempkes, in her recent essay "Rising Angels," has called a "a new freedom" and a revival of the Gothic. Partially a reaction against the cool, mediated design sensibility of late-Nineties art, which matched culture at large in its techno-optimism and commercial savviness, and partly responding to the seeming chaos of present day economic and political life, these works share a subjective urgency and a willingness to delve deep into historical romanticisms of all kinds.

The murals, drawings and paintings of Amelie von Wulffen depict "classical" subjects of German painting, the landscape and architecture—church naves, medieval villages, the artist's studio—overlaid with flower ornaments, pale washes of color, and occasional fragments of photography. Von Wulffen's work expands the intersections of architectural, psychological and personal space. Installations by Dani Jakob and Paloma Varga Weisz mix political and mystical symbolism to create works of metaphysical intensity and states of psychological tension. With their hothouse layering of pattern, figuration, off-key color and shifting figure-ground, paintings by Katharina Wulff invoke Vuillard, Florine Stettheimer and feminist literary voices (such as Virginia Woolf). Monika Baer's atmospheric paintings are rococo effusions of color, bodies and emotion rendered as synaesthetic space. Helena Huneke's "cat and kimono" performance suggests an aesthetic of private ritual. Likewise, the jagged forms and rude materiality of Katja Strunz's sculptural installations offer a furtive, ominous beauty.

Throughout "Falling Angels" the Self returns as a prism of the world. Not dissimilar to the hermeticism of other German artists like Kai Althoff or Manfred Pernice, the strategies and subjects adopted by these artists have a willfully romantic sensibility. As in earlier feminist art practices, subjective experience and emotional or psychological values are prominent. Much of this work is dark, sublime in a general sense, and referential of stylistic motifs drawn from recently disparaged or occluded corners of the aesthetic spectrum (the Pre-Raphaelites, Arts & Crafts, Durer, Symbolism, etc.). And though this work arises from distinctly German contemporary art contexts, it participates in a much broader aesthetic turn away from the showmanship and instrumentality of recent international art.

Complementing the exhibition, a special one-evening performance by Jutta Koether will be held on Saturday, March 8 at 8:30pm.

