

**Lucy Stein: Creemy Myopic Fables/ Group Show: Purpling**

16 October - 21 November 2009

PRESS RELEASE WORKS

BACK



*I turn each painting round and round like a catherine wheel til it yields - Lucy Stein*

Feminisms happy ending enables young, strong, empowered women to have breast implants, have casual sex and join the guys watching strippers in the bar. But is this the happy ending we want? Crafting a new language to discuss female sexuality, pleasure and aspiration, Lucy Stein challenges the pervasive visual stereotypes of raunch culture.

In her third exhibition at Gimpel Fils, Stein will present a series of new paintings and drawings, as well as lithographs and an installation made in collaboration with Rosie McGurn. Cumulatively, these works constitute a rebuttal against cloned femininity, preferring instead idiosyncratic, wilfully eccentric women and wounded decadents who seem at odds with the supposedly real world. In the work *Hot Zopiclones* at the Intertropical Convergence Cone, Stein presents a group of blank-faced, identical girls. Taking its name from a powerful prescribed sleeping pill Zopiclone, Steins painting is double edged: she reflects on not only the girls who sleepwalk their way through life aspiring to generic femininity, but also the chaos that ensues when unforeseen events collide.

In order to work her way through the complicated and often contradictory terrain of female self-awareness and representation Stein utilizes humour and sometimes overwrought theatricality. Her work expresses not just facts, but also feelings. Steins women are curvy, passionate, messy, engaging and real: never plastic, never perfect. These women have a self-sufficiency, even when they dont have all the answers.

But its as much about painting as it is about *Girls Gone Wild*. Paint, its materiality, its ability to be both crusty and smooth, gloopy and translucent has been a constant factor in Lucy Steins work. Exploring the act of painting as a physical experience, she works intuitively, moving not just the brush around the canvas, but also the canvas around the studio. Although Stein has previously acknowledged her debt to the expressionistic tradition of Northern Europe, she is currently exploring the modernist terrain of the unconscious, organic, and the visionary.

Steins musings on modernist ideals of unconscious expression, of becoming attuned to an inner psyche, and her concerns for female self-awareness come crashing together in her interest in D.H. Lawrence. Lawrences ambivalent depiction of women, at once veering between highly sensual, flawed, and self-deprecating, combined with his search for equilibrium through an earthy, primal sexual identity seeps into Steins thought. Screening the improvised dance routine from Ken Russells *Women in Love*, Stein links *Creemie Myopic Fables* with her curatorial project, *Purpling*, installed in the Downstairs gallery at Gimpel Fils. Tying the two exhibitions together the dance sequence demonstrates the importance of being attuned to your emotions but of also not taking yourself too seriously.

*Purpling* is the downstairs to Lucy Steins solo exhibition, *Creemie Myopic Fables*, upstairs. It will break all the rules of a good hang. A self made publication, *The Invincible Summer Within*, will accompany the two shows.

**Downstairs Purpling** Organised by Lucy Stein 16 October - 21 November 2009

Ozlem Altin (Orient Press), Aleana Egan, Merlyn Evans, Manuela Gernedel, Celia Hempton, Andrew Kerton, France-Lise McGurn, Polly Morgan, Shana Moulton, Claes Oldenburg, Jo Robertson, Niki de Saint Phalle, Markus Selg, Julie Verhoeven

In October 1440 the Breton Knight Gilles de Rais was hung in Nantes for murdering up to two hundred youngsters at his various stately homes around north-western France. In the early 1960s Niki de Saint Phalles shooting works helped to resuscitate her from serious nervous breakdown. Her *Le Chateau de Gilles de Rais* (1962) is a monstrous shooting piece made from clusterings of wide-eyed dolls in a wedding cake ensemble, with drips from her bullet wounds dribbling over the death-mask of the murderer de Rais. This altarpiece will hold court over a purple room full of curiosities.

*Purpling* is a verb from my lexicon that means to linger in a group in my purple-carpeted sitting room and unfurl after ungodly nights. We have to sit it out, talking in purple prose, sometimes in tongues, going with our frayed nerves and allowing the purple through our unsympathetic nervous systems until numbed endings are restored. Exaggeration, absurd chatter, poignant music, camaraderie and overwhelming dread are the ingredients that make up the healing process. With bruise-like purple walls (stirred up by Aleana Egan) and a lighting scheme much indebted to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, the artworks in *Purpling* could appear to be a tragic group, to borrow Vorticist Meryln Evans title. But Ken Russells film version of D.H. Lawrences *Women in Love* will help the sensibility to fall on just the right side of melancholic. *Purpling* is an attempt at a reenactment of my purple room at its most purple... from hungover to over-hung.

There will be body parts and laughs.

There will be some London knees, some sick religion, a dead pigeon, a Vorticists bird in flight, a dying man on stage, an overwrought ballerina, a discombobulated sort, a psychedelic meditation on big pharma logos, some doe eyes, some doom laden paint strokes, some bodies without will, a best Sunday dress and an oil slick. The ensemble will be bound together by the sound of the whimsical and darkly funny dance sequence from Russells Women In Love. The loop ends with a classic Lawrentian episode of man alone in nature: Alan Bates, playing Rupert Birkin, bleeding heavily from his head, rubs himself against dewy leaves and sashes in muddy puddles to rid himself of any taint of all the ghastly falseness of cold blooded sophistication. We will only be able to hear gasps, splashes and the birds tweeting.

Lucy Stein, September 2009

Purpling is the downstairs to Lucy Steins solo exhibition, Creemie Myopic Fables, upstairs. It will break all the rules of a good hang. A self made publication, The Invincible Summer Within, will accompany the two shows.

---

GIMPEL FILMS, 30 DAVIES STREET, LONDON W1K 4NB T. +44 (0)20 7493 2488 E. INFO@GIMPELFILMS.COM

