

Thomas K. Lang Gallery



« SUCCESS AND FAILURE/(MISS)ERFOLG »

Tara Campbell

Opening reception: Tuesday, April 12, 2005, 7 p.m.

Introduction: Monika Schwärzler

Duration of the exhibition: April 13th to June 3th 2005

Open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Location: Webster University, Berchtoldgasse 1, 1220 Wien

In this installation, I hope to generate a dialogue about the definition of “success” and “failure” in art and in life. I intend to do this by presenting not only what can be considered my successes, but also confronting the viewer with the question of failure. The theme of success and failure exists not only in each specific section of the installation, but also in the format of the exhibit as a whole: although the issues raised go to the root of what I am about as a person, conceptual art has not been my focus, so the overall exhibit is very unlike what I am as an artist. Is this a sign of success, in that I am gaining new dimensions as an artist? Or is it a sign of failure, in that my artworks are not speaking for themselves?

This is an installation based on dichotomies: pride and insecurity, confidence and neurosis, things one would rather keep private vs. the urge for public acknowledgement.

Documentation of a life in progress

In three phases

- 1) My life as an artist - Rejection letters interspersed with acceptances and evidence of exhibits, State Department Art in Embassies book, tax forms showing business loss (good enough to sell, but not good enough to make a profit). Should I congratulate myself for my successes or condemn myself for the glacial pace of progress? Am I making progress? Do people scoff at me as a trifling “weekend artist”, or do they admire me as a multi-talented individual? Why have I not pursued this career further—am I being practical about the need to support myself as a single woman, or am I afraid of coming up against the boundaries of my talent?
- 2) My life as a woman - Picture of me alone on bench, my hands with no wedding ring, me with a man. Still in progress, no “resolution/marriage” yet? Or is that the resolution already—single forever? Uncomplicated, adventurous independence or unenviable loneliness? Is my relationship status a success or failure?
- 3) A work of art - On the third wall, one work/one shot at judgment, what I’m most proud of now, the culmination of my work and my choices in life. By exhibiting the painting in the context of this exhibit, I am breaking with the practice of presenting the work as something to be admired, or at least appreciated, as a piece of art. I am instead inviting the viewer to assess the work in the success/failure paradigm. Is this piece closer to a success or a failure? By extension, am I closer to a success or a failure as an artist? And, because I self-identify as an artist, to what extent am I a success or a failure as a person?

Tara Campbell