



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ALI SMITH "MERGE", and Suko Presseau "Love and Ceremony" in the video room, at FREIGHT+VOLUME, May 12th – June 18th, 2011.

Public reception Thursday, May 12th, 6-8pm.

In 1519 the Portuguese explorer Magellan embarked on a three-year voyage around the world, crossing the Atlantic and continuing straight through to the Pacific (which he named the "peaceful sea") in order to locate and discover previously uncharted territory. The world then was a huge, unknown place, full of wonder, danger and the unknown: hundreds of countries, societies and tribes, thousands of animal species, flora and fauna, had yet to be found. In short, the world was Magellan's blank canvas, and the story was painted as his ship cut its swath through history. In the centuries since, the world has been mapped and charted in minute detail – through today's technology of GPS, satellite and internet there is arguably no place on the planet that hasn't been pinpointed, described and investigated down to a cellular level. What remains, however, is the life of the imagination: artists, writers, dancers, musicians, actors, filmmakers – and certainly many scientists - continue to probe uncharted waters on a daily basis. And while the cynics still attempt periodically to claim that painting is dead (and continues to die on a regular basis), Ali Smith is one young artist who proves, emphatically, that painting is very much alive and still a brilliant medium with which to explore the unknown.

Picking up where Gorky, DeKooning, Guston and Matta left off, Smith continues to delve into deep and near space in her canvases, as though each painting is a window into a previously unseen world. Through thick and thin brushstrokes, sculptural relief and flat background, and dazzling color contrasted with muted monochromes, Smith creates a tableau which constantly revises itself, and plays out like an unfolding theatrical mis-a-scene. Her titles are clues into the nature of this private journey: "Territory", "Luxe Life", "Into The Deep", and "To Here Knows When" are just a few. As Smith writes, "My recent paintings demonstrate an interest in sorting through the complexity of daily life and translating it into a direct, raw language of abstraction that is both lyrical and rough...the majority of each painting is created in the moment, an intuitive gesture that is gradually built up over time to create the world I want to see or inhabit, in all of its complexity and contradiction."

Creating an ideal world, or an invented utopia, has not changed much over the millenniums since the birth of painting. The canvas provides a retreat and a means of escape for many artists, a place to make sense of the conflict and cacophony of experience around them. As Robert Motherwell was fond of saying (and I paraphrase) 'what better life than that of an artist – to spend all day expressing one's emotions...' Smith certainly is one artist who has spent long hours immersed in this quest – a very private one, to be sure - but ultimately sharing the gift of her vision and discovery back to the viewer, and thereby enriching the world around us.

Ali Smith received her MFA from California State in Long Beach, CA in 2003, and since then has since exhibited her work widely, both in California and abroad. This is her second solo show at Freight+Volume.

Simultaneously, in the video room we are pleased to present "Love and Ceremony", a multi-screen installation by inter-disciplinary artist Suko Presseau. Concerned primarily with nature and ritual in her performance and video, Presseau utilizes eco-consciousness, kinesthetics, humor and spiritual practice in equal measure to convey her subject. In "Love and Ceremony", the artist has combined several concise vignettes – including "Vernal Fire Moon", "Love and Ceremony" and "Fish-Skin" – to form a whole. She writes, "I experiment between living deliberately and playing. Performing rituals, I attempt to find what feels right and to make sense of the individual within the world. Taking cues from the changing seasons, astronomical markers of time and natural or man-made environments, I explore the themes of agriculture, trade and spirituality. I use photography for its indexicality and immediacy, and sculpture and gestures to have an experience of making. The work is both honest and absurd; suggested narratives that conflate memory and meanings, fact and fiction, reality and fantasy."

Presseau received both her BA and MFA from Hunter College, has traveled and exhibited widely and is affiliated with the chashama North artist residency in upstate New York. She divides her time between Brooklyn and Millerton, New York.

Please join us for a warm artists' reception on Thursday, May 12th from 6-8pm. For more information please contact Nick Lawrence or Kevin Kay at 212-691-7700, or email us at info@freightandvolume.com.