

Phoebe Washburn:
Regulated Fool's Milk Meadow
July 14 until October 14, 2007

From July 14 until October 14, 2007, Deutsche Guggenheim presents the exhibition *Phoebe Washburn: Regulated Fool's Milk Meadow*. With this commissioned work, the young New York-based artist transforms the space on Unter den Linden into a spectacular environment, something between a factory and a greenhouse.

Washburn typically combines countless numbers of cardboard boxes or pieces of scrap wood that she skims off the refuse of consumers and commerce, combing dumpsters and loading docks for basic matter. Her materials are discarded relics of daily routines, incidentally discovered and transported to the studio where they are ordered and repurposed, imbuing with value what was once deemed worthless. Washburn highlights the potential of the common, overlooked and discarded. Her choice of previously used material is often considered as a political statement, as a reflection of a society of excess, as a metaphor for, or symptom of, consumption. But the artist is far more interested in creating something vital by using discarded and ignored material. Featuring already used, already worn, already consumed objects, which carry evidence of their own histories, she stacks, binds, and nails together her discoveries into installations that tell the story of their own making, consolidating by-products of their creation, such as sawdust and packing materials, into the final project.

For Deutsche Guggenheim, Washburn has conceived of *Regulated Fool's Milk Meadow* as a self-contained "factory" that incorporates its own product—grass for the project's sod roof—into the installation over the course of the exhibition. For the first time, the artist integrates mechanics into her work, using a conveyor belt loop to shuttle small plots of soil through different stations for light and water, which nourishes the growth of grass. These "plots" are periodically

tended by a "gardener" who plants the seed, allows it to germinate in a greenhouse before shifting the organic matter to the factory where it will mature, and finally places the output on the roof of the structure where it will eventually atrophy and wither, removed from the sustaining system of water and light, thus exhibiting the full cycle of growth and decay.

Washburn has relied largely on improvisational and amateurish construction techniques throughout her career; her earlier ad hoc landscapes of cut cardboard or scrap wood precariously filled exhibition spaces. The varying shapes and sizes of her materials and the building methods that she allows to develop organically and spontaneously result in structures that are often notable for their undulating, animated rhythm. Washburn has an affinity for systems, though they may appear illogical; she finds that instances of inefficiency allow for other elements to enter and guide the system. Here, the spontaneity of her architecture resonates with the natural development of the growing sod roof as well as its organic decline and decay. This aesthetic practice stands in contrast with the characteristic efficiency intrinsic to the conveyor system. But Washburn often mines such apparently ridiculous juxtapositions—here, organic growth and mechanical tools—as loci of creativity. Washburn's titles typically reflect this mischievous openness in their play on the sound and meaning of words; here, the title references the regulated system of a factory that, in this case, produces something fairly worthless ("fool's milk" can be considered a play on "fool's gold," a term for a mineral commonly mistaken for gold).

Phoebe Washburn was born in 1973. She received her M.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts in New York and her B.F.A. from Tulane University in New Orleans. Her work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions in the United States and Europe, including solo presentations at Zach Feuer Gallery (LFL), New York (2002, 2004), Rice University Art Gallery, Houston (2003), P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York (2004), Armand Hammer Museum of Art and

Cultural Center, Los Angeles (2005), and a current exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (on view until August 5, 2007). Her work was also included in *Greater New York 2005* at P.S.1. Contemporary Art Center (2005), *The Bench* at Neue Kunst Halle St. Gallen (2005), *Make It Now: New Sculpture in New York* at the Sculpture Center, Long Island City, New York (2005), and *Burgeoning Geometries: Constructed Abstractions* at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, New York (2006-07).

Regulated Fool's Milk Meadow was curated by Joan Young, Associate Curator for Contemporary Art and Manager of Curatorial Affairs, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum New York. A film crew of BOOMTOWNmedia accompanied Phoebe Washburn during her preparations for the exhibition in New York and Berlin. The result is the vivid artist's portrait *About Phoebe Washburn* (written and directed by Moritz Wulf) that gives detailed insights into Phoebe Washburn's working method. *About Phoebe Washburn* will be screened parallel to the show in the museum.

Along with the exhibition, a catalog will appear in German and English with texts by Jan Avgikos and Ben Hamper as well as an interview between the artist and the curator priced at 28.50 euros. *RFMM Gardener Schedule Study* was created as Edition No. 40 of the Deutsche Guggenheim, 20 original sketches by the artist that document the calendar for tending the grass during the exhibition. They are exclusively available in the MuseumShop for 1,500 euros.

An extensive supporting program of lectures and children's programs will augment the exhibition. Guided tours are offered free of charge each day at 6 p.m. The well-known Lunch Lectures on Wednesdays at 1 p.m., as well as the Keynote Tours each Sunday at 11:30 a.m., round out the offerings of the supporting program. We would like to direct your attention to the detailed information in the attached documents.

For further information:

Contact: Sara Bernshausen

Telephone: +49-30-202093-14

Fax: +49-30-202093-20

e-mail: sara.bernshausen@db.com

Internet: www.deutsche-guggenheim.de

Photo material can be downloaded directly from the Internet at
www.photo-files.de/guggenheim.