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VANESSA BEECROFT

Performance VB 53

Opening Saturday 28th May 2005, 6.00 p.m.

For her second one-woman exhibition at the Massimo Minini Gallery, Vanessa Beecroft presents a group of large pictures and the video *Performance VB53* realized at the Tepidarium in Florence's Horticultural Garden in 2004. This is one of Beecroft's most recent performances and was commissioned by the Pitti Immagine Discovery Foundation.

In the charming setting of the Tepidarium, which was designed by Giacomo Roster in 1880 and recently restored by the Florentine Municipality, the artist featured twenty-one naked models of different appearances and races on a mass of rough earth. Slender figures, curvaceous bodies and the explicit nudity clash with the damp and dirty soil. At first the girls stand in a close-packed group that slowly disperses: the models let themselves fall on the ground and get dirty touching the soil. During the exhibition, the overall picture alternates with full-figure portraits of girls wearing their long hair loose or gathered together, as if they were flowers or sprouts.

According to the artist, "The earth is a reference to land art. Very dark and humid, like the rich soil of croplands [...] The performance contrasts the purity of women's bodies, their nudity, with the dirty colour of the soil and its matter. Some of the models look like lilies, others like potatoes."

Like other Beecroft's works, the composition is dominated by female bodies in the nude or wearing accessories, with high heels, tights, wigs. Every aspect of female beauty has been investigated, from its strength and glamour to its relationship with classical art, films and great female characters in history.

In the Florentine performance, body, beauty and identity refer in particular to Botticelli and Filippino Lippi and mingle with autobiographical elements and the charm of the scenery; the artist pays particular attention to the dramatic and figurative setting that makes performances conceptually more similar to paintings than to performative actions.

The gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., from Monday to Friday, and from 3.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. on Saturday.

accardi, airò, amer, arienti, bagnoli, barry, beecroft, boetti, buren, castro, catalano, chiasera, donzelli, fabre,
finlay, friedman, garutti, gilardi, graham, Kapoor, halley, lavier, lewitt, marisaldi, mendoza, mercier,
mezzaqui, ontani, paolini, previdi, rockenschaub, sehgal, serse, simeti, spalletti, steinbach, streuli, torelli,
vermeiren