



"?", 2013, urethane foam, plastic, feathers, 115 x 148 x 111 cm / 45,3 x 58,3 x 43,7 inches. photograph by Guillaume Ziccarelli.

**PAOLA PIVI "Ok, you are better than me, so what?"**  
**Galerie Perrotin, New York / September 18 – October 26, 2013**

Galerie Perrotin will inaugurate its New York space with an exhibition by the audacious and playful Italian artist Paola Pivi.

Pivi creates artworks that are disorienting and simultaneously poetic. Though formally different, her work pushes the limit of what can be done in this world as an artwork. Her first comprehensive solo exhibition in the United States will take over both floors of the gallery and feature exclusive new works. On the ground floor, Pivi will present an installation of eight fantastic creatures. The polars bears will return in Paola's art! An unexpected performing sculpture, "Money machine (true blue, baby I love you)" will also be on display on the lower level, evoking the topography of the New York building which was previously a bank and hosted a vault.

Nomadic by nature, Paola Pivi has lived all over the world, including Shanghai, the remote island of Alicudi in southern Italy, and Anchorage, Alaska. She is presently in India. Pivi first exhibited at Viafarini in Milan in 1995, the same year she enrolled in the Brera Academy of Art in Milan. In 1999, she was co-awarded the Golden Lion for the best national pavilion (Italy) at Harald Szeemann's Venice Biennial. For this venue, which featured five Italian artists, Pivi presented "Untitled (airplane)", an inverted Fiat G-91 airplane resting on its cockpit.

Last year, the artist was commissioned two original public artworks in New York City: "How I roll", a project by Public Art Fund, a Piper Seneca airplane rotating on its wingtips, installed near Central Park at Doris C. Freedman Plaza, and "Untitled (zebras)", a striking image of zebras on a snow-covered mountaintop on the 25-by-75-foot High Line Billboard at West 18th Street. Like all of her photographs, this image is a live-action still, presented without digital intervention. Another of her iconic photographs, "Untitled (donkey)", shows a lonely donkey on a boat floating in the Mediterranean Sea.

This solo show in New York will be Paola Pivi's seventh exhibition with the gallery.

On this occasion, a monograph on Paola Pivi has been published by the gallery and Damiani featuring texts by Massimiliano Gioni and Jens Hoffmann.

**More at:**

[http://www.perrotin.com/artiste-Paola\\_Pivi-10.html](http://www.perrotin.com/artiste-Paola_Pivi-10.html)

[http://www.perrotin.com/press/Paola\\_Pivi-press-10.html](http://www.perrotin.com/press/Paola_Pivi-press-10.html)

Her current touring exhibition : <http://tulkus1880to2018.net/>

**Excerpts from the monograph published by Galerie Perrotin and Damiani on the occasion of the exhibition, featuring texts by Massimiliano Gioni and Jens Hoffmann.**

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(...) It is in Pivi's series of works with animals that this strategy perhaps emerges with most clarity and power. Her photographs of zebras transported into mountain landscapes, her images of ostriches and donkeys adrift in the middle of the sea, or her more recent yellow plumed bears are basically very simple variations on the technique of the ready-made, though objects have been replaced by flesh-and-blood creatures. Thus the disorienting changes of context do not lead to an exercise in intellectual and philosophical speculation, but rather to a seeming manipulation of reality's very DNA: the confusion is not between art and non-art, but between the real and the possible, between truth and hallucination. Paola Pivi is at work on a form of transgenic Dadaism. Anything can happen in Paola Pivi's universe: even the most cumbersome objects can be turned topsy-turvy - lorries tripped on their sides, airplanes and helicopters belly-up. Hundreds, at times thousands of objects and people can be lined up, put in a row, herded together. The idea of accumulation and concentration is fundamental to Paola Pivi's visual grammar: a hundred Chinese people aligned in a room, thousand of electric lights in "Per Luce", or hundreds and thousands of liters of liquid used for the fountains of "It's a cocktail party". Paola Pivi's installations act as a genuine accumulators, where forces and forms are literally stocked in a battery, packed together, lined up, ready to give off fresh energy and even to explode. Paola Pivi works on a Cyclopean minimalism, where repetitions and sequences are taken to such a frenzied degree of excess that they crumble into their own opposite, into a veneration of the unique and exceptional. Like the faces of the hundred Chinese; which stand out in all their singularity precisely because they are placed in a row, one after another. Or the lined-up ribbons in her satin sculptures; or again, the fountains in which her reference to the industrial aesthetic of minimalism seems to become more obvious, but is then criticized from within, by an explosion of noise and color that has none of the Apollonian calm of 1960s art. Actually, by evoking the image of fountains bubbling over with wine, the pumps in "It's a cocktail party" reject the aesthetic of silence: they are sculptures that raise a racket - or rather, a drunken toast. It's Bacchanal sculpture. (...)

Massimiliano Gioni "We Want It All"

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Paola Pivi's works are characterized by unapologetic simplicity. The components are often common objects, which initially take no more time to process than their ordinary, ubiquitous counterparts: a truck, a plane, a donkey. Titles often call subjects exactly what they are: "Pizza" (1998), "100 Chinese" (1998), "A helicopter upside down in a public square" (2006). But just as soon as the parts are grasped, any emergent concept of the whole gives way. With an agile shift in context, scale, or positioning, ordinary things become newly strange. Viewers are challenged to unsnarl semiotic tangles while undergoing a largely wordless experience, without any assurance that a solution exists.

Pivi is careful not to state the meaning of her pieces. The task of constructing symbolic importance is one that viewers self-assign, and to do so many recount anecdotes and draw on personal associations, indicating the specificity implicit in Pivi's arrangements. These experiences cannot be adequately theorized in broad strokes. When external frameworks are applied, the most apt seem to be immediate, visceral, and sometimes somewhat mystical: a religious text, the chemistry of the brain, the prophetic words of a philosopher on the brink of insanity.

Sublime works have always involved a leap of faith. Because they require participants to enter environments that underscore their physical and cognitive limits, they have always been uncomfortable. Feelings of wonder or precariousness could be considered ends in themselves, but they also have a purpose in encouraging meditation, first on how the emotion rests internally, and then on its implications for the self in relation to the world. While Pivi's works deal with common tropes: purity, disaster, things natural and manmade, they are less about what they communicate than about the introspection they incite. They withhold the kind of information that would enable visitors to apply familiar definitions, and as a result seem surreal, out of the realm of ordinary experience. But in fact, we encounter incomplete, suspended situations every day. The attention we pay to them and the meaning we make of them can tell us about our individual capacities as well as our collective imagination (...)

Jens Hoffmann "Say It Like You Mean It"

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**Paola PIVI was born in Milan in 1971, she lives and works in Anchorage (Alaska) but now she is in India. Paola Pivi was co-awarded the Golden Lion for the Italian Pavillion at the Biennale of Venezia in 1999.**

#### SOLO SHOWS (selection)

- 2013** "Ok, you are better than me, so what?", Galerie Perrotin, New York, USA; "Once upon a time. (A dream by paola Pivi)" with Carla Accardi, Carlson Gallery, London, UK; "Tulkus 1880 to 2018", Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 2012** "Tulkus 1880 to 2018", Castello di Rivoli, Torino, Italy; "Share, but It's not fair", Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, China; "How I roll", Public Art Fund, Doris C. Freedman Plaza, near Central Park, New York, USA; "Untitled (zebras)", High Line Art, New York, USA
- 2011** "Nice ball", Museo del Novecento, Milano, Italy
- 2010** "Sorry, I can't tell you", Galerie Perrotin, Miami, USA; "What goes round - art comes round", Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France; "Sorry I can't tell you", Carlson Gallery, London, UK; "Grrr Jamming Squeak", (public artwork), Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 2009** "I wish I am fish", Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, Australia; "1000", Tate Modern, London, UK; "And back again...presented by PIG", with Gelitin, Deitch Projects, New York, USA
- 2008** "It's a cocktail party", Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany; "It's a cocktail party", Massimo De Carlo, Milan, Italy; "And back again...presented by PIG", with Gelitin, Galerie Perrotin, Miami, USA
- 2007** "It just keeps getting better", Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland; "You gotta be kidding me", La Criée Centre d'art Contemporain, Rennes, France
- 2006** "My religion is kindness. Thank you, see you in the future", Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milano, Italy; "No problem, have a nice day", Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France; "Ffffffffffffffffff", Galerie Perrotin, Miami, USA
- 2005** "100 Chinese", Wrong Gallery, Frieze Art Fair, London, UK; "FANT ASS TIC", Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milano, Italy
- 2004** "To Me", (public artwork), Platformart, Gloucester Road Underground Station, London, UK; Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France
- 2003** Wrong Gallery, New York, USA; MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Italy
- 2002** "Alicudi project", Centre d'Art Contemporain, Bretigny-sur-Orge, France
- 2001** Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France; "Alicudi project", Galerie Michael Neff, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2000** "Paola Pivi. Un progetto per il Castello", Castello di Rivoli Museo D'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli, Torino, Italy
- 1998** "100 Chinese", Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milano, Italy



"Untitled (zebras)" 2003  
billboard (in 2012)  
photograph by Hugo Glendinning  
Exhibition in 2012 at "High Line Art", New York, U.S.A



"How I roll"  
2012  
Piper Seneca, steel supports, motor (rotation of the airplane at 1 rpm)  
11,84 x 12,93 x 11,84 meters  
38,8 x 42,4 x 38,8 feet  
photograph by Attilio Maranzano  
a project by Public Art Fund at Doris C. Freedman Plaza, New York, U.S.A