

Aleksandra Mir

LOCAL LIBRARY

Exhibition: September 28 – November 17, 2012, Tue-Sat 11.00 a.m to 8.00 p.m.

Ranging from a singular shelf to a combination of shelves, tables and benches that expand into room-size installations, all unique and flexible in size, Aleksandra Mir's new body of work sits at the intersection between sculpture and furniture. The artist refers to her objects as "comfort pieces for the digital age", and envisions them placed in otherwise clinical environments, galleries, museums or homes, in co-existence with modern electronic information devices: computers, plasma screens, cell phones, and of course, digital book readers such as I pads or Kindles.

In 2011, Amazon, the world's leading bookseller, reported that electronic book sales exceeded those on paper, a widely lamented fact, for what is gained by the efficiency of carrying thousands of titles in a pocket loses the warmth and tactility of a traditional library. *Local Library* thus marks a moment of nostalgia as we see the book as we have known it since the advent of the printing press in the 15th century vanish. Mir further reverses the book-making process and returns unprocessed paper through to its original state as wood.

In Mir's *Local Library* each piece carries the name of an author or literary character. This titling convention is a nod to the artist's upbringing in Sweden and the ubiquitous IKEA bookshelf 'BILLY'. In contrast to this mass-produced bookcase the works here are unique and ring with associations to their individual names:

UGO (Volli – b.1942, Italian semiotician)
ASTRID (Lindgren – b.1907, Swedish childrens' book author)
ERICH (Kästner – b.1899, German childrens' book author)
EMIL (of Kästner's stories) & IDA (of Lindgren's stories)
MERCÈ (Rodoreda – b.1908, Catalan novelist, poet, storyteller and playwright)
GRIMM (Brothers – b.1785/86, German linguists and storytellers of European folk tales)
UMBERTO (Eco – b.1932, Italian semiotician, essayist, philosopher, literary critic, and novelist)
CHARLOTTE-ROSE (de Caumont de La Force – b.1654, French novelist and poet)
TERENCI (Moix – b.1942, Catalan novelist and essay writer)
RAPUNZEL (of Grimms' story, an adaptation of Caumont de La Force 's Persinette)
MAXIM (Gorky – b.1868, Russian and Soviet author, political activist)
LEO (Tolstoy – b.1828, Russian novelist and playwright)
ANNA (Akhmatova – b.1889, Russian and Soviet modernist poet)
OLGA (Ivanovna Obukhova – b.1941, Russian journalist, Science Fiction writer and translator)
ALLA (Nazimova – b.1879, Russian and US film and theater actress, screenwriter and film producer)
MASHA (Gessen – b.1967, Russian and US journalist, author and political activist)

Because there are nearly 50,000 species of wood in the world with about 200 commercially available, the variety of texture and color of wood is vast. All the woods in Aleksandra Mir's work carry natural colors: deep greens, purples, yellows and browns which make up the rich spectrum of a painter's palette. No stain or paint has been used for Mir's project, only a neutral oil for preservation and enhancement of its natural organic qualities. The first pieces in this exhibition were crafted entirely in 20 species of natural wood, a range that the artist will expand as the work develops. Mir is also interested in considering room-size commissions around the world, to explore a variety of wood trails, to work with reclaimed and recycled woods and to deepen the connections between nature, history and the sense of location in her work.

Local Library can also be perceived as a library for those who can't or don't have the ability to read, since the surface, the texture, and color of every single block of wood tells a dramatic story of time and place, worthy of a novel. The colors will also deepen or lighten with age, an organic process depending on light and climate conditions. What you see today is most certainly not what you will get in the future. The process and beauty of aging will come to the foreground as history continues to narrate these works.

Aleksandra Mir (*1967) is a Polish born, Swedish-American Citizen who is currently based in London. She studied Media Arts at the School of Visual Arts and Cultural Anthropology at The New School for Social Research in New York City (1989-1996). She has held solo exhibitions at Kunsthau, Zurich (2006), Printed Matter, NYC (2007), Mary Boone Gallery, NYC (2007/2008), Saatchi Gallery, London (2008), Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2009), The Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC (2011) and her participation in international group exhibitions include the 53rd Venice Biennale, Venice (2009), Print/OUT, MoMA, NYC (2012), ARTandPRESS, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2012). She is currently preparing a retrospective solo exhibition at the Museum Leuven, Leuven, Belgium (2013) that will cover 15 years of her work on space exploration.

Local Library is the artist's third solo exhibition with Joan Prats in Barcelona.

To provide you with more images and information, contact: galeria@galeriajoanprats.com

GALERIA JOAN PRATS