

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

For Immediate Release.

Eija-Liisa Ahtila: *"The Hour of Prayer"*, 2005

January 19 – February 25, 2006

Opening reception: Thursday, January 19, 2006, 6 – 8 pm

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to announce our first exhibition in the New York gallery of the critically acclaimed Finnish filmmaker, video artist, and photographer Eija-Liisa Ahtila.

On view from January 19 – February 25th will be Eija-Liisa Ahtila's film *The Hour of Prayer* (2005, 14 min., 12 sec.).

The work consists of an installation made up of simultaneous DVD-projections with sound, which will be shown continuously on four adjacent screens in the South Gallery. This will be the first U.S. presentation of the work, which was seen earlier this summer and fall in *"The Experience of Art"* in the Italian Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale.

The Hour of Prayer is the artist's most personal work to date, a short tale of attachment and loss, based on the artist's own life. The events begin in New York during a winter storm in January and end in Benin, West Africa, eleven months later.

"The first part of the narrative retells a classical tale, in which the words and events explain each other and form a chronological progression. As the narrator speaks, words for time are prominent and images and sounds record the changes of season in various landscapes... The work moves away from the events in the story and the attribution of meaning, becoming a more general presentation of a private experience... The intention is to explore the possibilities of disrupting the traditional causal logic, structure and space for perception in screen narrative..."

-- Eija-Liisa Ahtila

Eija-Liisa Ahtila has long been considered a master of the multimedia form. Her work is conceptually organized around the construction of image, language, narrative, and space, and she has often probed individual identity and the boundaries of the subject in relation to the external world. Exploring the fragile inner life of her protagonists and the tenuous line separating fantasy from reality, Ahtila's narratives provide tales of disturbing intimacy, loss, repression, and neuroses and are often focussed on the unsettling emotions at the heart of personal relationships. Using the visual language of cinema, Ahtila presents large-scale installations with split-screen projections on multiple panels. These viewing conditions, with their simultaneously charged vantage points and stories, enhance the experience of a psychologically mutating time and space.

Eija-Liisa Ahtila was born in 1959 in Hämeenlinna, Finland and currently lives and works in Helsinki. She was the recipient in 2000 of the Vincent Van Gogh Biennial Award for Contemporary Art in Europe, Maastricht, The Netherlands as well as the Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award, Switzerland. In 1998 she received the Edstrand Art Prize, Sweden. She attended Helsinki University, Faculty of Law (1980-

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85); Independent Art School, 1981-84; and London College of Printing, School of Media and Management, Film and Video (1990-91). She received a Certificate from U.C.L.A. in Film, TV, Theater and Multimedia Studies, Los Angeles (1994-95) and attended special courses at the America Film Institute, Advanced Technology Program, Los Angeles (1994-95).

She has exhibited extensively at numerous museums and film festivals around the world and her films have received distinctive film awards and prizes over the years. Her work has also been widely seen on television in Europe.

In 2007, a solo exhibition of Ahtila's will open at the Jeu de Paume, Paris, and will travel thereafter.

Numerous one-woman exhibitions of her work have been seen internationally at venues such as Tate Modern, London; Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bolzano, Italy; De Appel Center for Contemporary Art, Amsterdam; The Dallas Museum of Art; Zurich Kunsthalle; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Museum Fridericianum, Kassel. Retrospectives of her cinematic work have been recently shown at Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; the Institute Finlandais, Paris.

Important group exhibitions include *Ecstasy: In and About Altered States*, currently at MoCA, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles through February 2006; *The World is a Stage: Stories Behind Pictures*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; *Girls Night Out*, Orange Country Museum of Art, Los Angeles, which traveled to Aspen and St. Louis, and will be on view in Houston at the Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, from January through February 2006; *51st Venice Biennale* 2005; *The Friedrich Christian Flick Collection*, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum fur Gegenwart, Berlin; *Outlook*, Athens; *Away from Home*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; *Reel Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; *Documenta II*, Kassel; *Sydney Biennale* 2002; *Venice Biennale* 1999 and 1997; *Manifesta 2* 1998, Luxembourg; and the *5th Istanbul Biennale* 1997.

Please join us at the opening reception on January 19th from 6-8 pm.

For further information, please contact the gallery at: 212 977 7160.