

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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For Immediate Release (March 31, 2011)

MARIE-JEANNE MUSIOL'S *BLACK HOLES* IMPART DARK ENERGY

(Toronto) – Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is proud to present *Black Holes*, a world-premiere exhibition by revered Québec artist Marie-Jeanne Musiol. Featuring more than fifty individual photographs in a single large installation and addressing a little known aspect of the Holocaust, it is ambitious in scale and subject matter. The exhibition is curated by Scott McLeod and accompanied by an essay by Celina Jeffery, published in *Prefix Photo 23*.

An opening reception, in conjunction with the release party for *Prefix Photo 23*, will be held on **Thursday, May 5th from 7 to 10 PM** at Prefix, located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto. The artist, writer and curator will be present. The gallery is open from Wednesday to Saturday, 12 to 5 PM, and admission is free. The exhibition continues until **July 23rd, 2011**.

Black Holes, Musiol's newest photographic installation, depicts dark black voids, shadowy depths that are encircled by flat grey concrete scattered with dust and debris. While potentially read as contrasting studies of light and darkness, in actuality the images are individual representations of the pit latrines constructed at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Nazi Germany, where hundreds of thousands of prisoners were required to defecate communally. Chilling and haunting in their totality, *Black Holes* is the most recent in a number of bodies of work that Musiol has photographed over the course of ongoing visits to Auschwitz. Earlier works incorporated more traditional photographs of the outer fields of the camp, where large trees growing out of the ashes of the dead suggest the metaphoric possibilities of recovery or regeneration. With *Black Holes*, Musiol continues her explorations of physical and psychic energy fields, but in a negative sense: the dark holes become an abyss suggestive of the negation of existence, a persistent reminder of human bodies made invisible.

Printed at almost life-size, the photographs contain a detail and realism that is almost unbearable, yet they eschew a documentary-type interpretation. Instead, the repetition of the dark space draws the viewer into an imaginative state, where the voids begin to unravel in various ways, perhaps becoming black mirrors unable to project their reflection, or portholes unable to depict any kind of view. When describing these uncanny images, the artist comments that, "like planets condensing a formidable amount of dark energy, they suddenly appear as an absolute expression of the cosmic unfolding of evil – the ultimate condensation of humiliation without redemption." As viewers, we are thus prompted to move beyond a literal understanding of these concentration camp latrines, and instead to consider art's capacity to represent, negotiate or bear witness to historical trauma.

About the Artist

Marie-Jeanne Musiol is an artist whose photographic work explores the nature and transmission of various types of energy. Born in Winterthur, Switzerland, she currently lives and works in Gatineau, Québec. She has exhibited her work internationally at ZKM Centre for Art and Media (Karlsruhe, Germany), MediaLab Madrid, Centro Cultural Conde Duque (Madrid), Ludwig Museum (Budapest) and La Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris), among other venues. Her light imprints of leaves were recently featured in a group exhibition at the Ottawa Art Gallery and new specimens from her energy botany series will be shown at the Canadian Museum of Nature (Ottawa) in December 2011. She is represented by Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain (Montréal).

About the Curator

Scott McLeod is a writer, curator and arts administrator. His work focuses on contemporary practices, with a specialization in photography, media and digital art. Since 2000, he has been the director and curator of Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, where he also serves as the editor and publisher of *Prefix Photo* magazine.

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About Prefix

Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is a public art gallery and arts publishing house based in Toronto. A registered charitable organization, Prefix fosters the appreciation and understanding of contemporary photography, media and digital arts. In 2010, Prefix celebrated ten years of programming excellence.

Acknowledgements

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For more information, print-ready images or to schedule an interview with the artist or curator, please contact:

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