

# RAMIKEN

## ANDRA URSUTA VANDAL LUST

July 3 - September 4, 2011

Ramiken presents *Vandal Lust*, Andra Ursuta's second solo exhibition in New York, following *The Management of Barbarism* at Ramiken Crucible's previous location on East Broadway.

A new chapter in Ursuta's cheerfully self-injurious flirtation with selected legacies of the past, the show was loosely conceived as an updated version of Ilya Kabakov's 1984 installation *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment*. For Ursuta, who grew up in Romania in the 1980s, Kabakov's installation articulates an enduring obsession with fanciful escape plans that continues to linger in the former Eastern Block, reflex-like, long after the collapse of Communism.

*Vandal Lust* consists of a single sculpture. It depicts the aftermath of the artist's attempt to catapult herself into space using a large medieval siege engine – a trebuchet – built to the limits of space capacity and loosely based on reconstructions found online. Rather than a solid, monolithic structure, the part wood, part cast plastic weapon includes a variety of materials ranging from cardboard to remnants of destroyed or abandoned projects to shards of tile from the recently removed gallery floor. An accumulation of overlapping, broken lines that recall Ursuta's works on paper, the structure can be assembled into multiple configurations, like hacked Ikea furniture. In its current formation, it suggests a droopy modernist monument whose crude angularity and imperfect verticals are closer to the schematic depictions of contemporary weapons seen on Afghan war rugs than to three-dimensional objects.

In *Vandal Lust*, self-invention and self-destruction are endlessly interchanged. It is unclear whether the longing and failure that fill the work are real or artificial. By resurrecting an obsolete piece of battlefield technology generally reduced to recreational use by living history enthusiasts, Ursuta blurs the distinction between authentic private feelings and their reenacted, staged version. In making her body into trebuchet fodder, she engages a modern performative tradition devoted to falling and failing that encompasses Yves Klein and Bas Jan Ader, but also Buster Keaton, and more recently, Jackass.

The exhibition is accompanied by a dialogue between the artist and her gallerist.

Andra Ursuta was born in Salonta, Romania, in 1979. Her work is featured in the New Museum's *Ostalgia*, the Bridgehampton Biennial and the group exhibition *Glee*, at Blum & Poe in Los Angeles.

Gallery hours: Wednesday - Sunday, 12 - 6pm