

TADASHI KAWAMATA TREE HUTS

15 May - 14 June 2008

kamel mennour is pleased to be presenting "Tree Huts", Tadashi Kawamata's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

Born in 1953 on the Japanese island of Hokaido, Tadashi Kawamata is famous for his in situ interventions, assembled from, among other things, wooden planks, chairs and barrels. Whether built up into fragile, Babylonian constructions (*Cathedral of chairs*, the Pommery vineyard, 2007), or stretched out to form serpentine walkways (*the Alkmaar Polders*, 1997), his works offer, to those who climb up onto them or set foot on them, another point of view - in every sense - over the place in which they are situated (*The Observatory* in Lavau-sur-Loire in 2007, and in Evreux in 2000).

However, some of his more recent installations do not allow direct access to the visitor. For Art Basel 2007, the artist created a small wooden cabin wrapped around a giant pylon, in front of the building that houses the international art fair. Contrasting dramatically with the surrounding modernist buildings, it was a poetic and ironic statement. Reminiscent, simultaneously, of an archaic tribal hut, a homeless person's precarious shelter and a dovecote, its position, perched up high, seemed an invitation to loftier thoughts. In what is, ultimately, the violent and competitive context of any contemporary art fair, the cabin placed its hypothetical Lilliputian inhabitants out of the reach of all predators. Evocative of childhood games, the cabin appears as a metaphor for an oblivious refuge that allows us to escape the world's bustle and rediscover a certain inner peace.

For his first exhibition at Galerie Kamel Mennour, Tadashi Kawamata has chosen to fill the space with eight wooden huts. Four of them will occupy the gallery's two main rooms, in a dialogue with an equal number dispersed in the main courtyard. Conceived as corbelled structures in the manner of hives or a swallow's nests, they will have the appearance of so many grafts or cobbled together architectural prostheses; like cottages, which together form the village of a mysterious and invisible arboreal community.

His work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions, both in Japan and abroad, notably at the Venice Biennale (1982), Documenta VIII and IX (1987/1992), the São Paulo International Biennale (1987), the Contemporary Art Biennale in Lyon (1993), the Chapelle Saint-Louis de la Salpêtrière (1997), the Munster Sculptur Project (1997), the eleventh Sydney Biennale (1998), the 4th Shanghai Biennale (2002) and the Biennale of Valencia (2004).

In the autumn of 2008, Tadashi Kawamata will install a dozen Tree Huts in trees at New York's Madison Square Park. At the same time, he will be erecting a monumental, perennial sculpture in front of the *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* in Paris: a ramp linking the city directly to the building's ceremonial hall.

His *Observatory* in Lavau-sur-Loire could be visited until 2009.

Richard Leydier, April 2008
(Translation: James Curwen)

Tadashi Kawamata "Tree Huts" is on show at galerie kamel mennour from Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 7pm. During this exhibition, Tadashi Kawamata also presents, in the court of the Monnaie de Paris, three of his huts.

If you require any further information, please contact Marie-Sophie Eiché, Jessy Mansuy or Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin.