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The Museum of Modern Art

FIRST NEW YORK MUSEUM PRESENTATION OF THE WORK OF PIETER LAURENS MOL AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Projects: Pieter Laurens Mol

September 19–November 12, 1996

Recent multi-media conceptual work by the Dutch artist Pieter Laurens Mol (b. 1946) is the subject of the next Projects show, on view at The Museum of Modern Art from September 19 to November 12, 1996. While Mol's work has been shown in Europe for the past twenty-five years, PROJECTS: PIETER LAURENS MOL is the artist's first New York museum exhibition. The poetic quality, ironic wit, undertone of melancholy, and juxtaposition of unusual materials and objects apparent in Mol's installations place him within the post-World War II European tradition of the art of Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, Joseph Beuys, and Marcel Broodthaers.

"Materials are at the center of [Mol's] attention," states Magdalena Dabrowski, Senior Curator, Department of Drawings, who organized the exhibition. "Every piece shows his deliberate interest in exploring their diversity, their special inner content, and their potential for creating expressive tension and energy. It is this spectacular sensitivity to materials and the constant search for their proper balance that informs Mol's creative process."

Mol's art defies a single stylistic category, although his interests in Dutch history, seventeenth-century painting, and the relationship between space and time remain constant themes. His emphasis on the investigation of states of mind, the expression of emotions, and the examination of matter and spirit imbues his art with a mystical, almost hermetic feeling that invites the viewer to decode it through protracted contemplation. His work shows great diversity, encompassing and often combining photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, mixed media objects, and installation.

In all his installations, Mol strives for a perfect balance between contemplation and visual beauty. For example, he creates a reflective inner space in *Course into Calm* (1994), an installation composed of a table with an open drawer in which a night moth sleeps under glass. Above the table hangs a small drawing: a simple horizontal line in charcoal. "With the drawer half-open, it is a very delicate tranquil moment," remarks Mol. "That is a quality I would particularly like to introduce to the viewer in New York—so full of noise and commotion—because I think it is extremely Dutch or perhaps European; it has a special impact."

In several new works created for this exhibition, such as *Vigilantia* (1996), *The Dream Estate* (1996), and *The Chromatics of Fatigue* (1996), Mol uses Saturnian and Marsian mythologies as metaphors for states of mind. Employing everyday objects with zinc and lead (materials associated with the planets Saturn and Mars), Mol creates an unusual play of materials as he attempts to extract their metaphorical meaning out of the literal. "These works have powerful effects, aggressively intruding into

the viewer's virtual space and causing him to contemplate diverse aspects and juxtapositions of urban and natural environments, to discover new realms of experience," writes Ms. Dabrowski.

The Museum's PROJECTS series is dedicated to the work of contemporary artists who are not widely known in New York. The series is made possible by the Contemporary Exhibition Fund of The Museum of Modern Art, established with gifts from Lily Auchincloss, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, and Mr. and Mrs. Ronald S. Lauder; and grants from The Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art, and Susan G. Jacoby. Additional support for this exhibition is provided by the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam, and The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

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