

**PHILLIPS DE PURY & COMPANY, NEW YORK PRESENTS *ATMOSPHERICS*,  
A GROUND-BREAKING GALLERY EXHIBITION OF "OBJECT ARCHITECTURE"  
BY ASYMPOTOTE FOUNDER HANI RASHID**

***ATMOSPHERICS***

**EXHIBITION DATES: JUNE 5 – JUNE 28, 2008**

**EXHIBITION RECEPTION: JUNE 12, 6 – 8 PM**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York – May 9 – Phillips de Pury & Company is pleased to announce the groundbreaking exhibition *Atmospherics*, by Asymptote founder Hani Rashid. The works presented in this important show embody Asymptote's radical architecture practice built on hybridity and spatial explorations. All of the works in the show are linked by their shared, formal exploration of objects subjected to speed and movement such as auto bodies or aerospace prototypes.

For *Atmospherics*, Rashid has returned to unique, geometric forms called **M-Scapes**, initially produced in 2001 as digital drawings and exhibited at the ICA Philadelphia. Iterations of the abstract M-Scape form have consistently been used as a building block for Asymptote's larger concepts. These M-scapes ("Motion-scapes") further described by Rashid as "**ambiguous bodies caught between the automotive body and the anatomical body,**" link Asymptote's past and present practices.

With four buildings currently under construction globally in New York City, Busan, Budapest and Abu Dhabi, Asymptote finds itself in a new stage of enacting the experimental ideas at the core of its practice, in "real," 3-D space. *Atmospherics* is the first time the M-Scapes have been produced as physical objects for exhibition.

The large-scale M-Scapes are offered in limited edition, including *Theta\_03* and *Theta\_04* and the dramatic *Baldaquin de Pury*. These enigmatic forms, created from fiberglass and finished with high-gloss automotive paint, beautifully evoke forms found in both technology and nature. *Theta\_02*, a symmetrical, abstract form with a flocked, undulating surface, invites the viewer to approach, and even physically touch, its smooth curves—bridging sculpture and object.

Asymptote's artistic engagement with technology is evidenced in a group of black epoxy vases produced by .MGX by Materialise as rapid prototypes created by a 3-D printer. With swirling, perforated surfaces, *Fugu*, *Ubu* and *Roi* appear as tornadoes and whirlpools in constant motion. This sense of flux carries over in a

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group of exquisite gold boxes commissioned by **Meta** (the contemporary arm of Mallett Antiques) and especially in *Ivo\_03*, a table crafted from slumped glass placed atop an undulating sheet cut from a single block of Tula steel.

Also included in the exhibition is *Roulette*, a spectacular room installation of white Corian pods each inlaid with a metallic groove, and the elegant *LQ Chandelier de Pury* arranged in large-scale configurations exclusive to this exhibition. Produced by **Zumtobel** in molded plastic and coated with a reflective, aluminum-infused finish, Rashid's *LQ Chandelier de Pury* modernizes the chandelier's refractory, baroque effects by using modern LED lighting.

*Atmospherics* provokes both desire and debate: Abstract sculpture or enigmatic chair? Ornate chandelier or spectacular installation? Object of interference or object of desire? As an answer, Rashid terms the works within *Atmospherics* "**object architecture.**" Unplugged from their inception in the virtual world, and introduced into the gallery context, these objects challenge conventional delineations between creative disciplines. Because of their large scale, and their purposefully ambiguous function, these inarguably beautiful works hover between sculpture and furniture, object and building.

"The works are hybridized conditions, mutations between art, design and architecture," says Rashid. "They are also objects of interference and disturbances, where each object produces a set of readings that fluctuate between referents we understand and those that are new to us."

*Baldaqin de Pury* is the ultimate example of Rashid's concept. A physically impressive ring structure configured from M-Scape forms, *Baldaqin de Pury* is firstly a formal exploration, "**a micro-architecture within a macro-architecture,**" says Rashid. The object's elusive function depends on the viewer's perspective and whimsy. The ringed form could be an outdoor pavillion situated in the landscape, a private sleeping chamber within a bedroom, or a minimalist sculpture within a gallery.

The exhibition title *Atmospherics* refers to the ability of these objects to act as catalysts, sensually charging their environments. Each piece in the exhibition possess the ability to both create and reflect the atmospherics of place—to absorb and transmit light, to transform the gallery space into living space, to be framed as architecture and be reframed as art. *Atmospherics* also refers to the emotive, phenomenological response of viewing the work and feeling solid categories shift.

Asymptote, founded in 1989 by partners **Hani Rashid** and **Lise Anne Couture**, has distinguished itself in the architecture, design and art worlds with a radical practice of spatial exploration via digital technology. With research and experimentation of virtual space at the core, Asymptote envisioned new forms of 21st-Century architecture in projects such as the Guggenheim Virtual Museum (1999 – 2001) and the NYSE 3-D Trading Floor Virtual Reality Environment (1997 – 2000).

Their hybrid experiments have allowed Asymptote to move fluidly between the art and architecture worlds. In a single year, Asymptote created a multimedia art project *Fluxspace 1.0 Installation* (2000) at the CCAC Institute in San Francisco, and the *Fluxspace 2.0 Pavilion* (2000) at the Venice Architecture Biennale. Following in 2002, Asymptote exhibited *Fluxspace 3.0* at Documenta XI in Kassel, Germany; in 2004, Rashid and Couture were awarded the prestigious Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts, in recognition of their exceptional contributions to the progress and merging of art and architecture.

Rashid describes Asymptote's practice as akin to a Renaissance model: **"Our studio work has meandered in and out of the art world as a way to test ideas and notions, theories and postulates about architecture, essentially. This goes back to the early days of architectural experimentation where the boundaries between architecture and art were blurred, and not as prescribed as we find today."**

At a moment when art, design and architecture seem to merge ever closer, the objects within the *Atmospherics* gallery exhibition at Phillips de Pury, New York challenge us to reconsider the limits and creative possibilities of each discipline. Ultimately for Rashid, **"Architecture is the provocative art of our time."** *Atmospherics* invites us to engage in the debate through viewing these exquisite objects of desire.

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*Atmospherics* by Hani Rashid

June 5 – 28, 2008

Opening Reception

June 12, 2008; 6-8 pm

Phillips de Pury & Company, New York

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