

ARTFORUM

Los Angeles

Mai-Thu Perret

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY
5130 West Edgewood Place
May 19–July 1

When Monique Wittig wrote *Les Guérillères* (The Guerillas) in 1969, she was already a celebrated author in France. She pioneered a mode of storytelling that put female protagonists at the epicenter, and formulated a writing style that set narrative fragments in loose coordination with one another, challenging orthodox boundaries between prose and poetry (something that fellow feminist theorist *Hélène Cixous* would later term *l'écriture féminine*). *Les Guérillères* chronicles the goings-on of an army of women. Throughout the text, in which Wittig's subjects are often referred to collectively, the women tell each other stories, argue about the cosmologies and myths most appropriate to their ideal society, play complicated games, destroy buildings, and attack enemies with rocket launchers, machine guns, and mirrors.



View of "Mai-Thu Perret: Féminaire," 2017.

Mai-Thu Perret's installation takes council from Wittig's novel, presenting a group of nine mannequin-like soldiers (made out of a heterogeneous mix of materials such as papier-mâché, wicker, ceramic, silicone, and metal) in various states of rest. Although they look anonymous, they're molded after the visages of some of Perret's closest friends and associates. Some, like *Les Guérillères V*, 2016, carry translucent AK-47 assault rifles. This is the army of lovers that cannot fail. Yet their inert aloofness, exacerbated by a high pedestal, puts their countenance on par with more traditional memorials. Together, they face a grid of thirty-two cast ceramic wall reliefs. Some of these, such as *Add where there's lots, reduce where there's little*, 2017, feature a carefully excised, perfectly round circle, a recurring symbol throughout the book. In *The mind's eye is as bright as the moon*, 2017, the edges of the ceramic slab are gathered together, fingers having dug into it like a bite, with a graphic red glaze applied so thin so as to show a deep purple underglaze—a body and its viscera, a pliable politics, a picture of action.

—Andy Campbell