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For Immediate Release:  
Vlatka Horvat: *Unleveling*  
April 29 – June 24, 2012  
Opening Reception: April 29, 6-8 PM

Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Vlatka Horvat. In her first solo show at the gallery, Horvat continues her ongoing preoccupation with the problematic interplay of human body and built space, which she investigates by abstracting, fragmenting, or outright removing figuration from her pieces. In a constellation of linked and mutually interrogating works exhibited here – a floor piece, a sculpture, and a series of smaller works on paper – Horvat asks us to contend with our own presence in the gallery, and through our shifting encounter with her interventions, forces us to negotiate the unstable border between ourselves and the structures we must fit into, as corporeal, psychological, and socio-political entities.

In *Which Shifts Out From Under You*, an installation piece in the gallery's main space, Horvat takes her cue from the floor's standard 4X8 plywood grid, and uses these measurements as a starting point to create a number of low, rectangular, reclaimed wood platforms without tops. Effectively rendered functionless, these provisional raised stands that can't be stepped upon are arranged unevenly – a parasitic second plane imperfectly mimicking the room's actual floor. As she advances through the gallery, the viewer finds the ground veritably reconfigured underneath her feet, and must readjust her sense of her own body and its relationship to the environment as the installation choreographs her movement within it. Through Horvat's intervention, the possibility of a new layer of ground is both raised and left undone or incomplete, speaking to broader – often failed – dreams and processes of social and political transformation. Stepping into and standing inside rather than *on* the imagined surface of these apparently unfinished structures, the viewer appears hobbled, her legs cut off at the ankle by this hollow landscape.

This unstable relationship between figure and ground is echoed in a series of collages, *Run Aground*, whose source material are family pictures from Horvat's parents' idealist youth in late 1960s Croatia, showing figures as they walk in various lines and processions. Horvat re-photographs each image, cuts it along or underneath the figures' feet – effectively removing the ground beneath them – and reconfigures it by flipping its parts around and upside down in a variety of ways. Horvat approaches her found images' representation of (now frustrated) communal hopes

through the inventiveness of the aesthetic sphere, forming new topographies and strange, unrecognizable hybrids from her source material. Apart from the occasional fragmented image-trace of the ground from which figures have been cut off, Horvat renders her source images abstract, often choosing to work with the blank verso of the photograph. In a series of moves, she shifts our attention away from the representational or narrative aspects of the image, and focuses instead on the gesture itself, on the material and associative possibilities of the cut line, and on the sculptural reconfiguration of the rectangular picture plane. The ground and the passage of human figures across the image are transformed as seismographic or waveform traces, as horizon lines, as an unintelligible flow of written characters or squiggles. In the series *Terra Incognita*, meanwhile, Horvat makes use of fragmented paper remnants saved from previous works, turned here upside down and attached to three-dimensional wooden panels. Divorced from their original context, the rearranged pieces – borders and margins of paper from which central images have been excavated – now recall small, mysterious island territories, in a play of layers, negative spaces, and multiple background planes. Finally, in *Flutter*, a sculpture comprised of a found ladder, balanced precariously, like a crude figure, with the help of two unfurled wire hangers, and positioned near a wall dotted with a series of smaller, bent wires, frozen in mid-swoop, Horvat bisects the room both horizontally and vertically, once more reminding the viewer of the subtle but significant impact of bodily gesture in space.

Vlatka Horvat has had solo shows at The Kitchen, NY, Bergen Kunsthall, Zak | Branicka, Berlin, and annex14, Bern, among other venues, and has shown her work extensively in group shows and biennials both internationally and in the United States, including the 11<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial, Aichi Triennale 2010, and *Greater New York* 2010. In November 2012, she will have a solo exhibition at the Boston University Art Gallery. She lives in London and New York.

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