



## DEATH BECOMES HER

Montreal artist Céline B. La Terreur takes dead-diva form in *The Antichamber of Death*

*visual Robyn Fadden*

A bloody crime scene and chaotically organized police documents fill Article's gallery space. Somewhere in there is the answer to a mysterious death – was it homicide, suicide or natural? But far from being the morose stuff of TV drama, *The Antichamber of Death*, Céline B. La Terreur's art installation, is inspired by the remarkable life, and relatively banal passing, of American-born, renowned Greek soprano Maria Callas.

"I have done so much research on Callas, and whenever I reached the end of each book, I was always disappointed by her death – that she deserved something more theatrical and dramatic," says the interdisciplinary Montreal artist. *The Antichamber of Death* adds these elements, along with a large dose of humour, to the Callas of history. The result is a new invention: a diva called Elizabetha Von Gorgenstein, who is both a tribute to Callas and to all women. And she's damn funny.

The diva, found dead in her castle's antechamber (where one would wait to meet the king or queen), lived with five muscular men; the case's chief

investigator is a women working with five attractive male subordinates; all five suspects are men. The tables are turned in the halls of power.

"This raises questions that concern women – power, hierarchy, social prestige, perceptions of women as hysterical or non-serious – but all this commentary is done with humour," says La Terreur, whose Valentine's Day performance will see her as the diva buried with rose petals while opera music plays.

"To me, anything I do is a failure if I don't hear people laughing," says La Terreur. "If I laugh about it I will feel less scared about these themes – death and power struggles. We keep death apart from our lives, not realizing that it's a part of the natural process of living." (C)

### ***The Antichamber of Death***

At Article (262 Fairmount W.), Feb. 13 to March 22

Valentine's performance: Feb. 14, 3 p.m.

International Women's Day performance and discussion: March 8,

3 p.m.



LA TERREUR AS HER MARIA CALLAS-LIKE CREATION,  
ELIZABETHA VON GORGENSTEIN

photo Alana Riley