



künstlerhaus bethanien gmbh : pressemitteilung

Berlin, 27 May 2008

MING WONG **Angst Essen / Eat Fear**

6 – 22 June 2008

Studio 2

HARIS EPAMINONDA

6 – 22 June 2008

Studio 3

Wed – Sun, 2 – 7 pm

JOINT OPENING:

THURSDAY, 5 JUNE 2008, FROM 7 PM

In his latest work **MING WONG** investigates theatrical manifestations of language and identity. Based on the conviction that film is the best-suited medium to gain insights into foreign languages and cultures, Ming reinterprets classics of world cinema, foreign-language TV films, and theatre productions.

In 2007, Ming produced the two-channel video installation *Lerne Deutsch mit Petra von Kant* (Learning German with Petra von Kant), an adaptation of an excerpt from Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), in which the main protagonist puts on a dramatic and wordy show of despair at finding out that her lover is leaving her. Wearing a blond curly wig and a long emerald-coloured dress, Ming, who is playing the role of Petra von Kant, is seen rehearsing idiomatic German expressions – “Ich bin im Arsch” (I'm fucked), “dieses miese kleine Dreckschwein” (this slimy little bastard)... – which he considered more functional for his stay in Berlin than the dull academic vocabulary of language manuals.

During his residency at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Ming, who was inspired by the strong Turkish presence in Berlin's Kreuzberg area, developed his latest video work, *Angst Essen/Eat Fear*, a reconstruction of another Fassbinder movie, *Angst essen Seele auf* (1973), which tells the story of Emmi, an elderly cleaning woman from Munich, who falls in love with a much younger Moroccan immigrant worker named Ali. The two unlikely lovers start living together as a couple, which at that time in Germany was socially looked down upon, if not deemed downright scandalous. In Fassbinder's film, their relationship threatens to turn into a disaster under the pressure of hostile and discriminatory social reflexes. In *Angst Essen/Eat Fear*, Ming plays and recites all the roles. Speaking an approximate German, he embodies up to five persons at the same time, relentlessly switching between various identities defined by gender, age or nationality. If Ming chose Fassbinder's

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film, it was not merely for its notoriety but because it addresses notions like 'outsider' and 'foreignness' in an exemplary manner.

As a Chinese- and British-socialised Singaporean playing all protagonists in a wholly unfamiliar language, Ming redirects the struggle of antagonisms back onto every single one of the characters, thus turning each figure into an 'other' or a 'stranger'. Beyond a reflection on identity and alterity – a topic which is at the heart of his artistic project – Ming's works are enlivened by a deeply funny and entertaining dimension, which helps reveal the positive options unlocked by a playful state of 'in-betweenness' – in-between ethnicities, languages and genders.

MING WONG, born 1971 in Singapore, lives and works in Berlin, London and Singapore.

He studied art at the Nanyang Academy in Singapore and the Slade School of Art, University College London (MFA). Ming has participated in numerous exhibitions in Singapore and throughout Europe, and has been working as a scriptwriter in theatre.

Ming is currently in residence at Künstlerhaus Bethanien's International Studio Programme thanks to a twelve-month grant by the National Arts Council Singapore.

HARIS EPAMINONDA uses various collage techniques – making cut-outs with a scalpel, tearing out certain parts of a picture, or constructing neat paper folds – to rework found footage from picture books or old film footage. But unlike the seamless juxtaposition characteristic of classic montage patterns, the images she creates remain in a subtle state of suspension. Haris Epaminonda's video sequences play with various levels of time and speed as well as movement, standstill, and colour. Obtained by assembling scalpel-chiselled cut-outs, her small paper formats, in which different layers of photographic imagery overlap, are fragile compositions based on formal-aesthetical considerations. Epaminonda is mainly concerned with the tension created by associating individual elements and issues of perspective and space. Her working method is thus often based on intuition and effectively undermines any sense of clear signification and symbolic dramaturgy.

In Studio 3 Epaminonda is showing an installation exclusively composed of found images.

They were chosen for their power of seduction and were left untouched to be displayed in a classic museum hanging. In absence of a strict thematic order, the only characteristic shared by the images is that they were culled from books printed between the 1930s and 1970s. When explaining her choice, Epaminonda invokes the haptic and sensual qualities of 'old' materials and printing techniques. This installation is in fact the spatial continuation of the artist's small collages – a "collage in space", in her own words – but is nevertheless to be viewed as an entirely new work which is more than the sum of its elements.

HARIS EPAMINONDA, born 1980 in Nicosia, Cyprus, lives and works in Berlin.

She studied at the Chelsea College of Art & Design, Kingston University, and the Royal College of Art in London. In 2007 she exhibited together with Mustafa Hulusi in the Cyprus pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale. In 2008, she took part in the 5th Berlin Biennale and the group show *Fare una scenata – Making A Scene*, curated by Jörg Heiser at the Fondazione Morra Greco in Napoli (until 30 July 2008).

Haris Epaminonda is currently in residence at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien's International Studio Programme thanks to a grant by the UNDO Foundation, Cyprus.

With best regards,

Künstlerhaus Bethanien