



künstlerhaus bethanien gmbh : pressemitteilung

Berlin, 27th June 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Künstlerhaus Bethanien presents:

NEVERTHELESS

**TOMISLAV CERANIC . MOTOKO DOBASHI . KATJA ECKERT . OLAF HOLZAPFEL
SEBASTIAN HAMMWÖHNER . JOHN KLECKNER . ROLAND STRATMANN**

Exhibition: 11th July – 3rd August 2008
Wednesday – Sunday, 2 – 7 pm, Studio 1

Opening: Thursday, 10th July 2008, 7 pm

NEVERTHELESS asks how it is possible – in our age dominated by media and advertising, ‘unspi-ritual’ in the main, and widely characterised by superficiality – that the spiritual reveals itself nevertheless in the form of radical philosophy (with a renewed, clear reference to Hegel) and in art, i.e. in a psychically inspired creative force.

The exhibition presents seven international artists representing this trend, artists who demonstrate the courage to instigate the “spiritual in art” (Wassily Kandinsky) with a conspicuous purism. All of them trust, more or less, to an inner principle and the interaction of mind and hand when using the medium of drawing. Their works suggest a change in the zeitgeist, making it rather anti-materialist and expressive of doubt in the fun society, yet without propagandist simplification. The aim of this tendency is not imitation of the outside world, or a documenting approach, but a search for the autonomy of refined emotions, as manifest in shimmering lines and an introspective tone.

Tomislav Ceranic (*1961, Croatia) | The drawings of his *Star City series* (2001-04) sometimes resemble 18th century engravings depicting sacred or profane buildings. These buildings cannot be identified or localised; indeed, they seem to float like UFOs between heaven and earth. By means of multiplication and the occasional mirroring of small details in the drawings, he produces configurations that look like a mandala or planets assembled from buildings spinning in orbit. These challenge the viewer’s perception at a level between science fiction and Renaissance perspective.

Motoko Dobashi (*1976, Japan) | Motoko Dobashi’s fairy-tales about loneliness and alienation, concealment and identity-finding consist of painting, drawing, printed graphic art and collage - all

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in one; a carpet of recycling material provides the underlay, its prerequisite being a mix of cultures. To equal extents, the artist taps the reservoirs of European and Japanese art history, manga tradition and Street Art. In this way, Dobashi achieves an imaginative combination of yesterday and today in her works.

Katja Eckert (*1976, Germany) | In addition to various long-term projects, Eckert works on a series of linear brush and ink drawings, having developed their sign system far beyond its primarily sociologically/philosophically motivated starting points. It is a matter of images conveying abstract concepts, descriptions of states, or - in recent works - of the problem of systemic immanence. In Katja Eckert's work, the series' conceptual starting point defines the formula-like quality of the images, whereby the drawing process is always direct and intuitive.

Sebastian Hammwöhner (*1974, Germany) | The linear element runs like a thread - in the literal sense of the word - through Hammwöhner's graphic carpet-like compositions and chains of ornament. Parallel to current musical developments in the field of Folk and anti-Folk, Hammwöhner regards the 'traditional' through the eyes of the avant-garde and conceives irritations by allowing 'high art' and elements of the so-called 'naive' or wrongly-termed 'primitive' to clash with one another. His works refer to folklore and handicrafts from various regions of the world, and their aesthetic autonomy helps them to correct our view of the supposedly 'archaic'.

Olaf Holzapfel (*1969, Germany) | Holzapfel's uses thematic studies and very often computer-generated drawings as his patterns. The observation of urban spaces and activity within them is the basic subject of his works. Some drawings are systematic, combining text and symbols, whereby the traces of their own movement are echoed as vegetative lines. While drawing, Holzapfel alternates between computer-generated and hand drawings; in his images, the division between ideal space and real space is abolished. He characterises his method as "translating and reading in reality".

John Kleckner (*1978, USA) | Kleckner documents an ahistorical, spectral world and draws his themes and iconographic worlds from a wide range of sources: he cites the Old Masters like Dürer, Cranach or Bosch as well as the visionary world of William Blake, ancient Greek mythology, or the cinema of George Romero and David Cronenberg. A key theme in Kleckner's work is 'mutation': his pictures construct the ecological utopia of a world in which man is not abandoned to his own degeneration, but develops into the natural world, uniting with nature, and finally merging with it to create an organic whole.

Roland Stratmann (*1964, Germany) | Stratmann uses the term 'endless drawing' for works that consist of a single line and evolve in a concentrated working process without interruption. From the flow of the line, a network grows on the picture surface; it is made up of structures, overlaps, concentrations and optical breaks. In a single drawing, therefore, it is often possible to see not only different perspectives of diverse scenes, but also parallel worlds and abstract forms alongside the ornamental. In the drawing process with its repeated crossing and overlapping of the line, pictorial structures resembling optical illusions evolve, opening up a wide range of associations. Time, chance and accident are factors calculated into the production process.

The exhibition **NEVERTHELESS** is being realised with generous support from the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Senate Offices - Cultural Affairs.