



künstlerhaus bethanien gmbh : pressemitteilung

Berlin, 1st September 2008

Dear Colleagues,

We are happy to invite you to the opening of the following exhibitions:

**AN TE LIU**

**Matter**

19th September – 5th October 2008, Studio 3

**MARTIN SKAUEN**

**Servants Swept the Sand Smooth**

19th September – 5th October 2008, Studio 2

Wed – Sun, 2 – 7 pm

**JOINT OPENING:**

**Thursday, 18th September 2008, from 7 pm**

**AN TE LIU**'s space-consuming sculptures and installations often consist of standard commercial electrical devices to filter and moisten the air. Piled up beside and on top of each other in the exhibition space, with their straightforward design, air vents and slats, and the cool white and grey colours of their cases, they resemble the model constructions of architectonic Modernism – functional housing blocks and building complexes that could originate from urbanist planners following the theories of "Neues Bauen". In his spectacular, exemplary design for the "Ville Radieuse", this movement's prominent representative Le Corbusier realised the notion of better-quality housing by means of functional forms, open to more light and air, and so better atmospheric hygiene. When - in his work *Airborne* (2000) - An Te Liu actually completely exchanged and filtered the air of the gallery space in the shortest possible time using a number of functioning air filters and ionisers, and actually caused air pollution as a consequence of this massive use of electricity, his sculpture developed into a critical comment on those increased efforts for atmospheric hygiene that have become almost manic in many places.

Liu makes use of the formal repertoire of historical Modernism, and references to this in his works merge into fictive scenarios of the future when a collection of air filters and ionisers in *Cloud* (2008), for example, are mounted on a panel floating in space so that they suggest a futuristic space city or an armada of space-ships that has been launched to defend the galaxy against an attack of killer microbes.

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Liu's new Berlin work *Matter* (2008) also investigates the conceptual worlds of cleanliness and dirt. This time, the particles of dirt or dust in the air around us become the focal point of a filmic installation that resembles a scientific experimental set-up: a small part of the darkened exhibition space is brightly illuminated and filmed by a camera, which then transmits images of the particles floating in the air onto two large projection surfaces. But the recordings, split into individual images, are projected with different timing – one simultaneous, the other at half speed – so that a growing discrepancy develops between the projections during the course of the exhibition, but also between what is filmed and one transmission. The fact that the camera is a model used for surveillance suggests that an invisible 'danger' lies in wait in the corners of the room – by this means, An Te Liu's work enters the complex field of tense relations between belief and insight.

**AN TE LIU** \*1967 in Taiwan, lives and works in Toronto. He studied art history at Victoria College, University of Toronto, and architecture at the Southern California Institute of Architecture in Los Angeles. Exhibitions include: *Style and Epoch*, MKG 127, Toronto (2008); 11th Biennial of Architecture Venice (2008); *136 and Counting*, SFMOMA, San Francisco (2008); *Figuration in Contemporary Design*, The Art Institute of Chicago (2008); *Pattern Theory*, MKG 127, Toronto (2007); *Modelle für Morgen: Köln*, European Kunsthalle, Cologne (2007); *S t r e t*, Witte de With, Rotterdam (2006).

**MARTIN SKAUEN** confronts the viewers of his drawings and animated films with some truly apocalyptic scenarios. In formats that are sometimes quite huge, he employs great precision and a love of detail to evoke dismal places that are the scene of murder, war or cruel rituals. Skauen's pictorial language owes much to the nightmarish visions of Hieronymus Bosch, but also to Greek mythology or contemporary sadomasochist comics, for example. He creates these disturbing motifs with sarcasm or very black humour, and the erotic is couple with violence or its latent presence. In these images one sees the figures of martyrs, torturers, perverts and hermaphrodites interacting in a multitude of ways, whereby the narrative 'scene' always remains mysterious, admitting several interpretations. Martin Skauen is a "dramatist of cruelty" (Ch. Tannert), and this is revealed in an exemplary way in works such as *What Goes Around Comes Around* (2007), a motor-powered, circular picture mounted on an aluminium frame. To date, Skauen has also produced four "filmed drawings", which are shown in short loops: *It All Fucking Fits* (2004), *Death of a Toast - master* (2005), *The Polarbear Split. A Handmade Musical* (2006) and *Felix Culpa. A Handmade Massacre* (2007). The drawings on paper are not only preliminary stages leading to the filmic loops, they can be understood in the sense of "extended drawings": both formats define and influence each other mutually and underline the artist's interest in the transitory.

Martin Skauen's pictorial worlds illustrate the vanity of mankind's efforts to overcome transience. They radiate a strange, melancholy fascination, which utterly entrals the viewer.

Martin Skauen is showing a selection of recent works in Studio 2 of Künstlerhaus Bethanien.

**MARTIN SKAUEN** \*1975 in Fredrikstad, Norway, lives and works in Oslo and Berlin. He studied art at Mølla Artschool in Moss, Norway and the National Academy of Fine Arts in Oslo. Exhibitions include: *There's Plenty of Gold, I've Been Told*, Galleri MGM, Oslo 2008; Laura Bartlett Gallery, London 2008; *Lights On*, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo 2008; Tang Contemporary (curator Carol Lu), Beijing 2008; 1st Athens Biennial, 2007; *When it starts it is the right time* (curator: Chus Martinez), Frankfurter Kunstverein 2007.

Martin Skauen currently holds a fellowship from the Office for Contemporary Art Norway and is participating in our International Studio Programme.