



künstlerhaus bethanien gmbh : pressemitteilung

Berlin, 13th October 2008

Dear colleagues,

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

CHRISTIAN NICCOLI

An steilen Hängen Laufen lernen

24th October – 9th November 2008, Studio 2

PATRICK TUTTOFUOCO

Dandelion

24th October – 9th November 2008, Studio 3

Wed. – Sun., 2 – 7 pm

JOINT OPENING:

Thursday 23rd October 2008, as from 7 pm

CHRISTIAN NICCOLI's artistic work examines specific situations and patterns of behaviour within different social groups, focusing on the interaction between individuals. Niccoli works with photography and video, but does not employ these media in a documentary way; he always stages his themes with great precision, employing professional actors. Christian Niccoli's films do not copy reality, therefore, but represent it in an abstract and metaphorical fashion.

Repeatedly, the artist concerns himself with the situation of 'encounter' in our post-modern society and the resulting small or big problems in human relations. In the video projection *The Gaze*, for example, he shows people whose paths cross on a moving staircase, people who exchange glances, stare at one another, flirt, or quickly look away. Niccoli arranges the soundtrack as a contradiction to the scene depicted: the exact words of a lonely hearts ad underlay the image of a couple flirting via eye contact, by which means Niccoli confronts and compares different aggregate states of 'flirting' or 'falling in love'.

An steilen Hängen Laufen lernen (Learning to Walk on Steep Slopes) in Künstlerhaus Bethanien is a multi-channel version of his previously shown 16mm film *Planschen* (Splashing Around, 2007/08). Six videos, which are projected onto single wooden cubes distributed around the exhibition space, show six people who – fully dressed, as if following a shipwreck, for example – are swimming around aimlessly and helplessly, wearing a swim ring. No real interaction between the protagonists occurs over the course of the 2-minute projection; they only look around at the others with apparent mockery or envy. Metaphorically, the film aims to describe the 'floating state' experienced by

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people who are strangers in a city, having just moved there: completely without ties and security (family, job) they simply let themselves drift in their new surroundings – Berlin, in this case.

As always in Christian Niccoli's oeuvre, the idea for a new work is triggered by an autobiographical situation. Thus Niccoli's films, which often demonstrate an absurd aspect, are both clear-sighted self-analysis and a critical observation of our society.

CHRISTIAN NICCOLI *1976 in Bolzano/South Tyrol, Italy, lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the art academies in Florence, Milan and Vienna. Exhibitions incl.: *Escalating perception*, Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin 2006; Kunstraum Innsbruck and Kunsthaus Meran, 2006; *Videoart yearbook* 2008, Galleria Civica d'Arte Contemporanea, Trento (I) in the context of Manifesta7, 2008; *Kunst-invasion*, Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin, 2008; *Tra-Monti*, AR/GE Kunst - Galerie Museum, Bolzano (I) in the context of Manifesta7, 2008; Hamburg Festival of Short Films, Filmpalais Hamburg 2008; V7- Venice Videoart Fair, Venice 2007. Christian Niccoli is currently a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, participating in our International Studio Programme.

PATRICK TUTTOFUOCO is interested in dialogue between people of highly differing origins and in urban life with its diverse structures and communities. His artistic practice is inspired by a desire for communication and an interest in the various features of social dynamics and their visualisation. For Tuttofuoco, the world is a "social, architectonic, relational, formal and cultural condensate", which he seeks to represent with the aid of diverse forms and media, starting out from his own personal interpretation. As a result, one can find in his works ingredients as varied as loud music, bizarre architectonic forms, dazzling colours, documentary materials or notes and found objects from flea markets.

In Studio 3 of the Künstlerhaus, Patrick Tuttofuoco has now created a kind of "artistic landscape" by grouping together several separate components to construct a walk-in installation: a large light sculpture hanging from the ceiling gently compels the visitor to adopt a 'new position' while seeming to form a protective portal.

Entitled *Dictionary*, a set of drawings including some collage parts depicts a huge range of things that Tuttofuoco has collected together in Berlin, because he finds them interesting, attractive or strange – but certainly relevant to the city.

The title component of the installation is provided by a common and therefore seldom noticed plant: the *Dandelion* is a frugal weed that seems just as much at home on wasteland and in scrap yards as it is in succulent meadows, and thus with its modest beauty symbolises adaptation to urban change, things always in a state of radical development. Tuttofuoco plans to fetch these dandelion plants into the exhibition space from various locations in Berlin; here, he will exhibit and cultivate them in order to return them later to their original locations, which he has carefully marked on a city map. *Dandelion* is the artist's personal homage to the city of Berlin, which Patrick Tuttofuoco sees as embodying permanent, everyday change in a way that no other city does. This is precisely why he made Berlin into his home some time ago.

PATRICK TUTTOFUOCO *1974 in Milan, lives and works in Berlin. He studied art at the Art Academy in Milan and architecture at the Politecnico, Milan. Exhibitions incl.: *Revolving Landscape*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin 2006; *Chindia*, Haunch of Venison Gallery, London 2006; *Hyper Design*, Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai 2006; *On Mobility*, Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam 2006; *Luce di Pietra*, Villa Medici, Rome et al. 2007.

Patrick Tuttofuoco holds fellowships from the Associazione per il Circuito dei Giovani Artisti Italiani – GAI, des Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali – PARC, and the Dipartimento per le politiche giovanili – POGAS in the context of our International Studio Programme.