



künstlerhaus bethanien gmbh : press release

Berlin, 22nd May 2009

Dear Colleagues,

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

**BJÖRN PERBORG**

**Geschichten aus dem Koffer**

3rd – 19th June 2009, Studio 2

**GUY ZAGURSKY**

**Syncope**

3rd – 19th June 2009, Studio 3

Wed – Sun, 2 – 7 pm

**Joint Opening:**

**Dienstag, Tuesday, 2nd June 2009, from 7 pm**

**BJÖRN PERBORG**'s creative work encompasses animations, videos, sculptures and installations, which often portray men in society or discuss religious iconography. Perborg's working method is characterised by an emphatically neutral perspective, with which he illuminates particular circumstances. As a result, it often seems as if an anthropologist from outer space were studying, with some astonishment, the habits and customs of societies on earth. Making the absurdity of specific situations or behaviours more obvious, this perspective lends Björn Perborg's works their characteristic humour and fine irony.

With *Geschichten aus dem Koffer* (Stories from a Suitcase), Perborg is presenting a new series of works in Studio 2 that he has produced during his stay in Berlin. The series combines five oversized suitcase-sculptures with a two-channel video installation. The inside of each suitcase functions as a kind of exhibition space en miniature, in which five different stories are told using all manner of animations, an installation, a slide show, and a photo exhibition in mini format – they are the artist's personal experiences, which could happen everywhere in the same or a similar form: for example, the slide series *The trip to America* – accompanied by a commentary in the style of a dry lecture – tells of the hectic reactions and measures triggered when the artist set off to catch a flight to the USA and attempted to pass through security with a plastic bag full of washing powder, a miniature knife and a book about Islam in his hand luggage.

The "stories from a suitcase" also represent the artist's personal reflections about travel, about places where he has lived and experienced things, about roots and nostalgia. Finally, in his two-channel video installation that is also being shown in Studio 2, Björn Perborg surprises visitors

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with a grandiose, 'sparkling' – in the true sense of the word – new interpretation of the Drum-Groove from Led Zeppelin's *Immigrant Song* and a synchronised firework show.

**BJÖRN PERBORG** was born in Västerås, Sweden, in 1974; he lives and works in Berlin.

After studying music in Örebro, Moscow and Göteborg, he graduated from the Valand School of Fine Arts (MFA). Exhibitions and screenings incl.: *Dina4 Projekte*, Munich; *Montagsbar*, Temporary Kunsthalle, Berlin; *700IS* Reindeerland Festival, Iceland; *Paralelas y Meridianos*, Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires; *LOOP* International Festival for Videoart, Barcelona, (2009); Museo de la ciudad de Queretaro, Mexico; *Örebro International Videoart* Örebro; *Suitcase studies*, Unten Drunter, Malmö; Festival del videoclip chileno, Santiago, Chile; *Supermarket* Art Fair, Stockholm (2008). Björn Perborg holds a fellowship from the International Artists Studio Program in Sweden (IASPIS) in the context of Künstlerhaus Bethanien's International Studio Programme.

**GUY ZAGURSKY's** works often operate with optical and visual illusions. The artist is not concerned with spectacular effects that lead to immediate amazement; instead, Zagursky's sculptures and installations invite the viewer to take time to meditate on the infinite and its incomprehensibility and to consider, facing the sculpture *Untitled (Well)*, for example, how to experience the simple beauty of a well-like circle with its illusion of endless depth. In Zagursky's work, the concept of beauty is not oriented on the historical ideal of nature; instead, in his works beauty is expressed using cool, technically produced materials such as fibre glass, neon tubes, concrete and frequently reflecting glass, which gives the viewer an illusion of infinity while throwing him back on himself. Across the ages, mirrors have always been a symbol of "vanitas" par excellence – a concept that refers simultaneously to "vanity" and "mortality". In this sense, Guy Zagursky's works can certainly be understood as post-modern versions of earlier portrayals of vanitas and, like those, they illuminate the battles and power struggles that hold man captive in his vain efforts to reach immortality and eternity, like Sisyphus. Zagursky 'constructs' contemporary cosmopolitan allegories, allowing the recipients of his works every opportunity to connect them into their own stories. Guy Zagursky's exhibition *Syncope* in Studio 3 of Künstlerhaus Bethanien consists of two groups of works that seem to accost each other: eight machines designed and built by the artist himself are mounted on one side wall of the studio, and like an abstract, soulless troop of police – each comprising a metal arm with a truncheon, a perspex shield and a motor – they cause the truncheons to hit the shields rhythmically with an ear-splitting row whenever viewers approach. The wall opposite is occupied by eight more machines that function according to the same principle; however, they are not equipped with truncheons but with white sticks for the blind, the syncopated tapping of which joins with the striking of the truncheons to create a hectic staccato.

**GUY ZAGURSKY** was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, in 1972; he lives and works in Tel Aviv. He completed his artistic training at the B. ed Hamidrasha Art School, Beit-Berl and the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Fine Art Department, Jerusalem.

Exhibitions incl.: *Placebo*, Summer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (2007), *Boys Craft*, Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa (2007), *Phatamorgana*, Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa (2006), *Center of Space*, Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Herzliya (2005), *Arctic 7*, America Israel Cultural Foundation, Ramat Gan Museum (2005).

Guy Zagursky is currently a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien for twelve months in the context of our International Studio Programme.