



Berlin, 19th November 2009

Dear Colleagues,

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

DIRCEU MAUÉS
Somewhere – Alexanderplatz

27th November – 13th December 2009

Wed – Sun, 2 – 7 pm, Studio 2

Opening: Thursday, 26th November 2009, from 7 pm

DIRCEU MAUÉS is a photographer whose oeuvre constitutes a far-reaching investigation into the photographic process and the techniques and equipment involved.

His works, therefore, are always in-depth examinations of the photographic mechanism as such, and this study presents him with his own opportunity to define a camera's functional categories. The current omnipresence of digitally generated images is an occasion for Dirceu Maués to reflect on more original forms of photography in his works. Deliberately setting them apart from the predominantly functional parameters to be found in today's modern cameras, he constructs his own cameras using the simplest of means. Over the course of time, in this way the so-called "pinhole" technique based on the principle of the camera obscura has developed into his main means of aesthetic expression.

Even in the Renaissance, the camera obscura – based on a principle already familiar to Aristotle – was sometimes equipped with light-enhancing lenses. These cameras were literally black boxes or also (walk-in) chambers with a small opening through which the light from outside could penetrate so that an external scene, albeit standing on its head, was projected onto the inner wall opposite the opening. A pinhole or hole camera does not use a lens, but is based on precisely this optical effect. The image is "fixed" by attaching film material or photo paper to the inner projection surface.

Dirceu Maués uses his pinhole-cameras to recreate a hand-crafted means of image production

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dating from an era long before that of analogue photography, transferring this method to a present day which has long since arrived at the technical perfection of digital photography or artificial image generation. In this way he brings the intuitive, 'human' factor back to the fore.

Maués developed the installation *S o m e w h e r e – Alexanderplatz* during his stay in Berlin; it consists of six projected video loops showing photos of the well-known Berlin square from different vantage points. In preparation for these shots, Maués used matchboxes to painstakingly construct 120 small pinhole cameras by hand, and then attached photo paper to the inside. Assisted by the Berlin artists' collective *P i s o*, Maués subsequently recorded photo sequences of the square from various vantage points as well as the dominant sounds in the area.

Afterwards he scanned – again by hand – the 120 negative rolls that had been produced and assembled the photographs on them into a film animation: the result was a 360° panorama of the square, characterised by the marks of chance and his own work by hand with its minor errors and faults. In this way the artist consciously grasps – as he had already done in his project *Ver-o-Peso pelo furo da agulha* realised with a pinhole camera in 2004 – the opportunity to breathe new life into scenarios and cityscapes which are otherwise reproduced to excess, as pure stereotypes, in the form of tourist photos or postcard motifs.

Maués sees his overall artistic practice as a multilayered experiment operating in the border areas between photography, cinema and video and thus “comparing and contrasting the extended time of the pinhole camera with the absolute moment of film.” (D. Maués)

DIRCEU MAUÉS was born in Belém (Brazil) in 1968; he lives and works in Brasilia. He completed a study of art at the Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA), graduating with a Bachelor of Art in 2008. He began taking photographs as early as 1990 and realised his first individual exhibition *Estações do Olhar* in the Galeria Theodoro Braga in Belém in 1994.

Dirceu Maués currently holds a fellowship from the Itáu Cultural Institute, São Paulo and is a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien for one year in the context of our International Studio Programme.

The press office of Künstlerhaus Bethanien is always happy to provide further information and illustrative material on request.

Best regards

Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH