



Berlin, 4th January 2010

Dear colleagues,

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

SOO JUNG CHOI

No Man's Land

15th – 31st January 2010, Studio 2

THOMAS LEROOY

Something In Between

15th – 31st January 2010, Studio 3

Tues – Sun, 2 – 7 pm (new, extended opening times!)

Joint **OPENING**,
OPEN STUDIOS and **special sale of publications:**

Thursday, 14th January 2010, from 7 pm

SOO JUNG CHOI's artistic practice is based on concepts such as correspondence, similarity, difference and repetition. She selects trivial things or their illustrations from various contexts of everyday life and paints copies of them; once they have been separated from any precisely definable context, she introduces them into her large-format paintings and collages as both structuring elements and artistic depictions. The motifs are accumulated, repeated and transformed, whereby specific characteristics or a repeated use of colour gives the breathtakingly diverse painting an almost mathematically stringent foundation. Soo Jung Choi's techniques of painting and collage suggest an affinity to handicraft activities such as weaving, knotting or the accumulation of rows of stitches in knitting. The images are realised in acrylics and expose the picture background by localising themselves within it like separate pixels. The painted surface therefore creates not only a descriptive, but also a spatial illusion.

Essentially, the exhibition *No Man's Land* comprises three groups of works: the two-part, large-format work with the hallucinatory title *Floccinaucinihilipilification* is based on a net-like compositional structure that entices the viewer into the painting's labyrinth with a crowd of hundreds of small, colourful motifs – which were inspired, among other things, by the goods found in Berlin flea markets – like small bait ingeniously laid out by the artist, and so causes him to become entangled in its 'net'. The second work complex shown in Studio 2, *Treasure*

b.w.

Island, works in a similar way. It is a two-part, painted collage with transitions from the painted surface into pasted-on scraps of cloth, wool or brightly coloured knots in thread. However, here the composition is based on the dot structure of reproductions showing actually existing stellar constellations, which the artist found in an atlas. The presentation is supplemented by an ordinary commercial fishing net partially lifted from the floor by nylon threads suspended from the ceiling. An almost rectangular space is thus formed and illuminated so that the net's structure is duplicated as a shadow outline on the floor of the exhibition space.

SOO JUNG CHOI, born in South Korea in 1977, lives and works in Seoul. She studied painting at Hong-ik University and Seoul National University (MFA) and art at the Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow (MFA).

Exhibitions include: *Parallel World; Twix Painting, Babel*, Trondheim (2009); *Identity, Self, Praxis* Gallery, New York, USA (2009); *Flying Cream Carpet*, Camden People's Theatre, London (2009); *Artisit*, McDonah Building, Galway, Ireland (2008); *And So It GOes*, Art News project gallery, Berlin (2008); *R ai nbow*, Insa Art Space of the Arts Council Korea, Seoul (2007).

Soo Jung Choi holds a fellowship from the Arts Council Korea and is a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in the context of our International Studio Programme.

THOMAS LEROOY's drawings and sculptures involve a creative game with citations and reminiscences from art history, by which he examines some very contemporary themes. The biting irony that is occasionally noticeable in Lerooy's technically extremely accurately realised drawings and his sculptures arises from a clever use of highly symbolic objects such as skulls, playing card motifs or skeletons, which he combines into scenarios that often appear macabre: in Lerooy's works, for example, roses bloom from skeletons, centaurs pose in the manner of lap dogs, and putti sporting death's heads rather than angelic curls cavort – dressed in innocent white – in a kind of danse macâbre. Employing a succinct formal language, Lerooy creates a universe filled with endless possibilities, in which images develop spontaneously from each other and merge into labyrinthine, confusing landscapes of ideas. The starting point of Thomas Lerooy's works is always a specific kind of "aura" that he perceives in connection with artworks, statues or even places within a city. By confronting these historical patterns with familiar symbols of transience and decay, he distorts the traditional, original meaning of a monument with its postulate of eternity and so lends it a bitter-ironic aftertaste. This is often reminiscent of Baudelaire's poetry or James Ensor's painting. The figures that Lerooy creates seem to stem from a parallel existing world; they provoke the viewer by holding him captive somewhere between attraction and revulsion – his immediate reaction – without ever permitting an unambiguous interpretation of the works.

The central piece in the exhibition *Something in Between* is a sculpture of two putti, quite literally 'caught' in a loving embrace in a glass case; Lerooy creates a dialogue between them and several drawings, thus investigating the multiple layers and ambivalences of human emotions and relationships, the permanent "in between" of our position in life, and in particular the role of the artist as a 'mediator' who represents these emotions.

THOMAS LEROOY, born in Roselaere (Belgium) in 1981, lives and works in Brussels.

Exhibitions include: *Salon du Dessin*, Palais de la Bourse, Paris (2009); *GALA 5*, Museum of Fine Arts, Leipzig (2009); *Brain Dance*, Gallery Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels; *Anatomie, Les peaux Du Dessin*, FRAC Picardie (2009); *The flowers of evil still bloom*, Cueto Project New York (2009); *The hands of art*, S.M.A.K. , Ghent (2008); *FIAC*, Galerie Rodolphe Janssen , Paris (2007); *Gegen den Strich*, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2007).

Thomas Lerooy holds a fellowship from the Flemish Government in Brussels and is currently a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in the context of our International Studio Programme.