

JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION

Schanzenstrasse 54 T. +49.211.585.884.0
D 40549 Düsseldorf F. +49.211.585.884.19
info@julia-stoschek-collection.net
julia-stoschek-collection.net

NUMBER FIVE: CITIES OF GOLD AND MIRRORS (02 July 2011 – summer 2012)

From 25 June 2011, the JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION will be presenting selected works in a newly designed exhibition.

The show features 44 works by 35 artists in all, including many that have never been shown before, works acquired in the past few years and site-specific spatial interventions. Each work is presented in its own, carefully elaborated setting. Rather than being organised around a single theme, the exhibition picks up on several content strands and reflects current themes in contemporary art. Its title, CITIES OF GOLD AND MIRRORS, taken from a film by **Cyprien Gaillard** shown in the exhibition is a metaphor for the fact that the pieces on display explore socio-political questions relating to urban development, humankind's relationship to architecture, and our own personal vanities and desires.

The first exhibition area presents artists like **Gordon Matta-Clark**, **Tobias Zielony**, **Cyprien Gaillard** and **Francis Alÿs**, whose works reflect on the relationship between humankind and architecture.

With his spatial interventions, or "building cuts", **Gordon Matta-Clark** was already opposing traditional concepts of space back in the 1970s, openly criticising urban planning and the conditions governing public life and private spaces. His films not only document his sometimes anarchic activities, they also map the city as an urban space in all its many facets and are all that remains of his processive interventions.

In his 2009 photo animation made up of 7,000 individual images, **Tobias Zielony** documents the LE VELE DI SCAMPRIA (2009) urban housing project, built by architect Francesco di Salvo in the 60s. This complex in a suburb of Naples has now achieved tragic notoriety as a mafia stronghold. Zielony's animation presents the decayed, crumbling buildings and their inhabitants, recording the decline of the complex and the strange, mystical appeal it has come to possess.

The 16mm film which gave the exhibition its title, **Cyprien Gaillard's** CITIES OF GOLD AND MIRRORS (2009), places fictional elements from the Japanese-French TV series "The Mysterious Cities of Gold" alongside scenes of tourists on package holidays. Gaillard contrasts a Cancún hotel complex in Mexico built in the 1970s with the ruins of the once-mighty Mayan civilisation. Donning the hat of a documentary filmmaker rather than that of an archaeologist, Gaillard shows American students celebrating spring break with excessive binge drinking against the impressive backdrop of a hotel

complex, which imitates Mayan pyramids – thus confronting viewers with the banalisation of culture.

REHEARSAL I (ENSAYO I) (1999-2001) is the title of a key piece by Belgian artist **Francis Alÿs**. In the guise of a modern Sisyphus, a red Volkswagen Beetle repeatedly attempts to drive up a hill to the sound of a Mexican “Mariachi”-brass band. Just before it reaches the top the band stops playing and the car rolls back down the hill, meaning that it has to start all over again. The video is an existential metaphor for the political situation in Mexico and for the economic discrepancy between the country and its larger neighbour, the United States.

The second exhibition area marks a break from the dominance of filmic works. Here, pieces by **Andreas Gursky**, **Mark Manders**, **Andro Wekua**, **David Claerbout**, etc. exemplify the complexity of the forms of expression shown.

Andreas Gursky's large-format photograph UNTITLED XII, NO.4 from 2000 shows a page from Robert Musil's epic novel “The Man Without Qualities” – page 769, it turns out. This section of the book addresses the relative scale of the human spirit, humankind and nature – indeed, humankind's position within the cosmos. Yet, we learn, Gursky's photograph is not a faithful copy; he has digitally altered several passages, replacing some words with others of his choosing. And these insidious changes are not obvious simply from looking at the page. The oversized reproduction of the photographed page also breaks with the conventional perception of art.

Mark Manders' sculpture LARGE FIGURE WITH THIN NEWSPAPER (2010) is part of his “Self Portrait as a Building” concept, begun in 1986. The unfinished project is Manders' archive of his own experiences, thoughts and interactions with reality. The installations and sculptures that arise from this exploration of the self take on many different forms – they may incorporate objects from the artist's everyday life; they may constitute installations that fill an entire room. His works constitute hermetic, self-referencing, humorous or profoundly poetic representations of an abstract version of his biography. They consist of various components and are resonant with deep emotion and melancholy.

Much like Manders, **Andro Wekua** stages his own imaginary biography in his video NEVER SLEEP WITH A STRAWBERRY IN YOUR MOUTH (2010). Wekua has his alter ego – a boy wearing a mask – set out in search of traces of his childhood within a nightmarish setting. Wekua's imagery, borrowed from the Science Fiction and Horror genres, does not provide a coherent portrayal of his memories, but is rather a construct that incorporates elements of the past as it really happened and the past as remembered. At the same time, the work's title carries a warning that develops an oddly seductive power through mere associative allusion. The video does not tell a straightforward story; its bizarre images and colours are more reminiscent of dream sequences. Wekua's work is based on principles of dramatic composition; stages and spatial interventions are important elements that serve to further heighten the auratic impact of his installations.

David Claerbout's work draws on the forms of representation used in cinema. In his two channel video installation AMERICAN CAR (2002-2004), Claerbout confronts the viewers with two projections they cannot see simultaneously. The first shows the interior

of a car; two men seen from behind stare out of the window as rain drums on the windscreen. The second shows the car from the outside, standing all by itself in the middle of an unspecified landscape. The viewers visit the two rooms one after the other, so that the period of time between viewing the two screens reflects the time represented in the film. This allows viewers to leave the traditional perspective of the moviegoer behind and step inside the film. The illusionary movie space thus merges with real space, an effect that is subtly enhanced by the use of two audio channels, which unsettles the viewers, making them feel uncertain as to where exactly they are positioned. Claerbout throws a questioning light on the moving images of the film medium from the perspective of photography and by exploiting the editing options available to him. Screen 2 does not display an actual film, but a montage of digital photographs.

In accordance with the collection's focus, filmic works are given prominence in the exhibition. At the same time, works like those of the described ones like **Mark Manders** or **Andro Wekua**, **Simon Denny**, **Jon Kessler**, **Zilvinas Kempinas** or **Wolfgang Tillmans** defy the strict definition of the medium and thus testify to the "contagious power" of the complex issues they explore.

The exhibition features works by the following artists:

Francis Alÿs, Charles Atlas, Salvatore Bevilacqua, Johanna Billing, David Claerbout, Jane Crawford, Keren Cytter, Simon Denny, Olafur Eliasson, Robert Fiore, Cyprien Gaillard, Andreas Gursky, Nancy Holt, DAS INSTITUT and Adele Röder, Zilvinas Kempinas, Jon Kessler, Mark Manders, Gordon Matta-Clark, Jessica Mein, Adrian Paci, Oliver Payne, Davide Pepe, Rob Pruitt, Nick Relph, Robin Rhode, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Jeremy Shaw, Robert Smithson, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Wolfgang Tillmans, Clemens von Wedemeyer, Andro Wekua, Christoph Westermeier, Tobias Zielony

A catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition.

Press and PR:

Monika Lahrkamp
Schanzenstrasse 54
D 40549 Düsseldorf
Germany
Tel.: +49 (0) 211 58 58 84-12
Fax: +49 (0) 211 58 58 84-19
lahrkamp@julia-stoschek-collection.net
www.julia-stoschek-collection.net