

kerstin engholm galerie

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Darren Almond Mark Hosking

Opening Event: 8.6.2000, 7 PM

Duration of Exhibition: 9.6.2000 until 8.8.2000

With the British artists Darren Almond and Mark Hosking (both born in 1971), we are presenting two positions which have one moment in common: In their sculptural work, both artists are engaged in the issue of the background textures of human existence, rather than focussing on specific formal aspects or limiting their work to a conceptually narrow theme.

Hosking's functional objects are comparable to the construction designs of the United Nations and other (non-profit) relief organisations who are attempting to produce technical, life-saving devices for so-called Third World countries, hereby using the technical products (trash) of our capitalistic social system. Hosking invents and develops these simple mechanisms, with which mattresses are produced or tinned food can be heated with solar energy. The utility functionality of his objects clearly opposes their formal aesthetic value. At first sight, they provoke a merely formal perception, as, with their smooth, clean surfaces, they seem to stand in the tradition of modernist, constructed sculpture. The existence of a rudimentary functionalistic aspect, however, crudely negates this impression - facing the fact that you're dealing with prototypes of life-saving machines. By this means, the sterile aesthetics of Hosking's works receive their ironic and pungent core. With his objects, Hosking not only provokes a confrontation with our (western) affluent society - it's not a coincidence that his "social sculptures" often recall the equipment we believe to know from fitness studios -, in his work, he offers very simple, essential processes such as sleeping, eating, and drinking.

By deciding to show his 1997 film "Oswiecim, March 1997" in Vienna, Darren Almond thematically joins with Mark Hosking in bringing out the highly-explosive issue of politics in the show. Almond's works generally have in common a sense for the resonance of spaces and objects, whether in their original form or slightly manipulated, and for the specific vibrations they transmit when given the room needed to develop. With "Oswiecim, March 1997" - filmed in Auschwitz -, Almond has succeeded in creating a concentration of mental strain which almost becomes contemplative and is thus even more arousing. Projected on two screens and accompanied by a desolate, emotionally stirring score by Arvo Pärt, the film - made outside the former concentration camp - is extremely minimalistic: After a screening of a few yards of the road, the camera is hanging from a bus stop in the rain. With his film, Almond has made a statement on Auschwitz' atmosphere and the place's emotional burden. As in many of his works, "Oswiecim, March 1997" is also a piece on time - on time, respectively on concealed experiences which we make within the course of time, and which change our lives. This is the point, where the prosaic turns into the incredible: the deportation of countless people to extermination camps during World War II. Once again, Almond managed to provoke this effect, when, in 1999, he transformed the bus stops found in Auschwitz into sculptures and transported them to a gallery in Germany. Lewd expectations will be disappointed by this restrained piece, however, in a time when explicit violence is omnipresent in the media, this work's discreet character yet intensifies the psychological effect.

For further information please contact Kerstin Engholm on 00/43/1 585 73 37.

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