

# kerstin engholm galerie

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## A COUNTRY LANE

SAM DURANT / TOBIAS HAUSER / RICHARD HOECK / JOHN MILLER

Opening: November 20, 2002, 7 p.m.

Duration of exhibition: 11/21/2002 to 01/11/2003

### Press release

The growing economic importance of a location is not just a factor in an artist's exhibition in the gallery system but rather in the market-oriented and politically informed business relationship between real estate brokers and companies. Controlled living in opposition to the free spirit inherent in the matter at hand is the basic mood of group show which Richard Hoeck had initiated with his colleagues Sam Durant, Tobias Hauser and John Miller in L.A. in the spring of 2002.

The complex processes of co-optation and individual definition of living space is something that all four artists are preoccupied with in different ways. In his collages, Sam Durant, an artist living in L.A., breaks the stringent, modernist interiors of the Case Study Houses with pasted-in images reflecting the life of the American middle class. Dan Graham, by contrast, addresses this directly, transforming the glassy nature of this living aesthetics in various pavilion concepts. This also holds for the "Rustic hut" modeled after the garden pavilion of the Stadtvilla of the Viennese gallery owner Christian Meyer. The collaborative project of Richard Hoeck and John Miller is also based on this construction. As a kind of "continuation" the two artists adapt the construction using wood and cardboard to design a "more rustic hut". Here their intention is not to subvert the reputation of an important postmodern artist but to play down his aesthetics. And ultimately they want their easily transportable hut to be able to dock onto the urban network and to leave the protected garden

The German artist Tobias Hauser also reacted to the vacant land of Leipziger Platz in Berlin with a hut, using it as an alienating object in a strategically constructed outside space. In 2001, he occupied a building deserted by real estate speculators in 1999 with a simple shingle-roofed hut construction. This model of the "Walden" hut was to check the surrounding spiraling economic growth in a transcendental way. This concept relates to Henry David Thoreau who published an eponymous autobiographic book on this hut in 1854, appealing to a solitary life in defiance to the decadence of urbanism.

Each artist created a very personal synthesis of his/her understanding of anti-aesthetics with the model of the private and public sphere. While the "Walden" hut may have become a programmatic manifesto for the "Unabomber" who opposes a society threatened by corporate expansion, the idiom of the individual pieces remains focused on alternative visions of life and urbanity. Similar to Sam Durant's deconstruction of the modernist house and the hut constructions created by Hoeck and Miller as early as 1998 at the Vienna Kunsthalle, all four artists use these notions of architecture to examine the dangers of political economy. But without forgetting (and in keeping with the title of the exhibition: "A Country Lane" taken from a title of Wendy Carlos' original sound track for "Clockwork Orange") to simply have a bit of fun in the company of friends.

**Sam Durant** (1961/USA), lives and works in L.A., 2003 Kunstverein Düsseldorf, 2002 Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, *Color Pictures*, Blum & Poe, Santa Monica, 1998 *Into the Black*, Kapinos, Berlin

**Tobias Hauser** (Germany/1959) lives and works in Berlin, 2002 *Walden*, Leipziger Straße, Berlin, 2001 *Natürliche Todesursachen und andere Gründe*, Zwinger Galerie, Berlin, 1998 *U-Neues Deutschland-Fin de Siècle*, F.M. Schwarz, Cologne

**Richard Hoeck** (A/1965), lives and works in Vienna and Istanbul, 2002 *Lobby in Rear*, Mackey – Apartment Garage, L.A., 2000 *The Additional Bedroom*, Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, 1998 *White Studies*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna

**John Miller** (USA/ 1954), lives and works in New York und Berlin, 2002 *Topology for a Museum (without walls)*, Kunstraum Johann Widauer, Innsbruck, 2001 *Double Date*, Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, 2000 *Pilot*, Richard Telles Fine Arts, Los Angeles, 1998 *White Studies*, Kunsthalle Wien (mit Richard Hoeck)

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