

# kerstin engholm galerie

Schleifmühlgasse 3 A-1040 Wien T +43 1 585 7337 F +43 1 585 7338 office@kerstinengholm.com

## BJÖRN DAHLEM

### AUA EXTREMA II

Opening 14/03/2002 19.00

Duration 15/03 - 04/05/2002

#### Press Information

We are pleased to announce the first solo show of the young German artist Björn Dahlem in Austria. Dahlem, born 1974 in Munich, studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dusseldorf and currently lives in Berlin.

"Dahlems spatial installations refer to scientific phenomena and theories, spanning from relativity theory, quantum theory, psychology, philosophy, science fiction to alchemy. Even if his concepts involve quarks and electromagnetic fields, star constellations and rocket constructions, they are playful mechanical settings of an uncertain and unstable parallel world and have not evolved out of high-tech spirit or an unbroken belief in scientific progress. The trash materials Dahlem uses and the virtuosity of his "space/world" settings are beyond anything the viewer might be lead to expect from concepts such as "Black Hole" or "elementary particles". Where Dahlem tries to reach the stars, he constructs - instead of sterile laboratory devices gleaming with chrome - provisory situations and experimental scientific settings which already seem to comprise the failure of the experiment. According to Dahlem, this scepticism is characteristic of his generation. The end of the great utopian theories that have shaped the 20th century has left its mark on young artists. The belief in an "objective" view of the world is shattered. By applying scientific theories to art, Dahlem does not see himself as an "artist who goes into science", but rather perceives his models as parameters for existential questions such as "What am I made of, where do I come from?" etc. - questions he then undermines with extremely simple means, with artistic precision and irony. Certainties, knowledge, systems, utopias are tumbling. [...] With such diverse influences as Tatlin, Stanislaw Lem or Kippenberger Dahlem connects theoretic constructions with the subversive gestus of absurdity." (B. G. Gardner, "Björn Dahlem", faz net. 2001)

"Dahlem's bizarrely beautiful Club Superspace 3 - Deuterium Attenzione (Charm-Sphären) was like a spaceship that had landed directly in the front yard of its art historic references. It recalls both Martin Kippenberger's neo-Dada constructions and Georg Herold's wooden slat sculptures - important influences from the Rhineland in the 1980s, which Dahlem was exposed to during his years as art student in Dusseldorf. With carefree, space-dominating gestures, Dahlem incorporates their aesthetic while distancing himself from the ponderousness of associated rhetorical obligations. [...] Yet the fact that Dahlem uses the kind of material used by children or craft practises makes the more history-laden references seems slightly absurd. Embedded in the cold light of neon, this black object also vibrates with a more contemporary atmosphere of club spaces, makeshift social utopias, dark resistance and escapism, creating a tension between the influences of art history and a kid of new pseudo-science. But his scientific rhetoric is just as improvised as the work's disparate materials. They are part of a game, the aim of which is to allow the artist's visions find a niche in past languages." (Anke Kempkes, "Björn Dahlem, Kunstverein Hamburg", in: frieze, January-February 2002)

Solo shows (selction): "Club Superspace II", Kunsthalle St. Gallen; "Club Superspace 3", Kunstverein Hamburg; "Club Superspace I" Kunstverein Freiburg (2001); "change is good", Museum Friedericianum Kassel; "club horror vacui", Luis Campaña, Cologne (1999); "that's entertainment", Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf (1997); "für pathos", Academy of Fine Arts Dusseldorf (with Gereon Krebber) (1996)

Group shows (selection): "Zero Gravity", Kunstverein Dusseldorf; "Future Land", City Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (2001); "Löcher" (with Ralf Berger and Gregor Schneider), Luis Campaña, Cologne; "Modell, Modell ", Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen (2000)

Awards: Support grant for Fine Arts of the county of Nordrhein-Westphalen (2000)