



JAN DE COCK

DENKMAL 3, KERSTIN ENGHOLM GALERIE, SCHLEIFMÜHLGASSE 3, VIENNA, 2003

Opening: November 6, 2003, 7 p.m.

Duration of exhibition: November 7 to December 23, 2003

Press release

The Kerstin Engholm Galerie will be presenting the first Austrian one-man show of Jan de Cock (born 1976), a young Belgian artist.

Jan de Cock's spatial and temporal interventions in the traditionally static and inanimate exhibition spaces are divided into several stages, at the end of which photographs referred to as "Denkmal" (monument) repeat the entire process once again. This, however, is preceded by massive, architectural changes which break up the existing exhibition space. Wall, floor and ceiling pieces, pyramiding niches and boxes, floors stacked on top of each other and window openings as well as empty shelves and isolated pedestals represent a rigid, geometric, yet enigmatic and seductive landscape which interferes with and changes the perspective.

The space itself resembles a living being. It merges with the beholder to form a kind of interbody relationship in which the gaze is directed and limited, focussed, distorted and misled. The geometrical structure of a space is thus expanded by its historical, social, physical, general and private structure. In this "habitat" which constantly spawns semantic shifts and makes one and the same thing appear in a different light, albeit only slightly, it is only possible to perceive and recognize something by moving along." (Franz Xaver Baier, Space) Jan de Cock does not so much dump a product into the receptacle of art that represents a segment of power, but rather he structures the product in its own active fields of power and thereby makes it ultimately accessible to mind and body.

In Jan de Cock's installations which he often describes as collateral damage and interprets as symbolizing the incursion of the social and the political in art, this aspect becomes visible in the photographic pieces that reflect earlier "events". The "tableaux vivants" framed in illuminated boxes and lit up in intervals of three seconds, the movements and positions of individuals that have been instructed to place themselves in constructed spaces are rendered, once again as an intervention in the grid of this landscape as additional, integrated spatial elements. The photographs mark both the goal of the extensive intervention and the beginning or orientation of any further one. Similar to Barnett Newman, what we see in Jan de Cock is a temporalization of a seemingly stable space that has been detached from the beholder's consciousness and of the possibility of physically experiencing the "now" of this veritable material.

A solo show at the Fons Welters Gallery in Amsterdam in 2001 was followed by an exhibition at the Museum voor Schone Kunsten which lasted for several months and by a parallel show at the Stedelijk Museum of Contemporary Art (S.M.A.K.) In the same year he presented an "Art Position" at the Art Basel/Miami Beach that was held for the first time and in 2003 a "Statement" at the Art Basel. For 2004 we can already announce a further solo show at the Dusseldorf Kunsthalle.