



BJÖRN DAHLEM

The Homunculus Saloon

Opening: 19/01/2006, 7 p.m.

Duration of the exhibition: 20/01/2006 - 15/03/2006

Press release

The Homunculus Saloon in Björn Dahlem's installation represents an utopian place where the search for meaning and the construction of an ideal identity can be explored. The symbol of this investigation is the settler who like the artist himself consistently tries to advance into new worlds. The Homunculus, an artificial little person, works as a metaphor for the ongoing process of giving meaning to the world and constructing identity, and the Homunculus Saloon seems to be the place where answers and solutions can come into being. It might be the place where the great western classic of the Big Rock Candy Mountain, a hobo's paradise, can become true. Where liquor is dripping off the rock, where the sheriffs have peg legs and their dogs have rubber teeth, and where the inventor of work has been hung in the clink. It might be a place for the perfect state of the hyper-psyche where all inconsistencies dissolve and the *Übermensch* dozes off peacefully.

Dahlem's works evolve from his preoccupation with scientific models, images and theories ranging from the black hole to the uncertainty principle. Based on his substantiated but playful research, he transfers his results into extraordinary sculptural and architectural constructions. Dahlem exceeds into a world beyond physical models and philosophical thought experiments, he questions and subjectifies any concept of science and rational truth. The apparently objective scientific explanations are put down to a narrative approach to existential questions.

At the bottom of the expanding and filigree wood strip constructions often lie complex geometrical systems, linked with symbols from science and alchemy. However, the apparently rational approach is only the surface of the artist's quest for a deeper meaning and truth. Thus Björn Dahlem follows the tradition of German Romanticism that was likewise bound to this contemplation and search for deeper meaning. Dahlem's irony, his laconic humour and verve may sometimes distract the beholder from the essence of his art which is reflecting on the innermost structure of the cosmos. Dahlem amplifies the genre of the romantic *Seelenlandschaft* that artists like Caspar David Friedrich were preoccupied with, trying to explore the imponderable profundities of the inner self.

Björn Dahlem (1974/Munich), lives and works in Berlin.

Latest solo shows: Hiromi Yoshii Gallery, Tokyo (2005); Nie-Mehr-Morgen-Raum, Luis Campaña Galerie, Cologne (2005); Utopia Planitia II, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2004); UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2004); FRAC Paca, Marseille (2004); Coma Sculptor, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York (2003).

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