

STUDIO 495

GOOD NEWS FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE BAD NEWS

February 13 to March 22 2008 / Opening Tuesday January 12, 6 PM

Fia Backström, Ida Ekblad, Jens Haaning, Jonathan Horowitz, Scott King, Germaine Kruij, Gianni Motti, David Perry, Vivienne Westwood

Curated by Gianni Jetzer

The Swiss Institute is proud to launch its new project space STUDIO 495. It offers the opportunity of a more spontaneous approach to curating.

The first show, *Good News for People Who Love Bad News*, brings together an international group of artists. Selected works are hung in pairs and confront each other in a provocative way. Juxtaposition is rooted in the Art Historical practice of formal comparison, which Heinrich Wölfflin popularized in his *Principles of Art History*, 1915. Rather than unveiling a paradigm shift, these contemporary comparisons undermine the reading of political imagery.

The *Image Archive* by **Germaine Kruij** anchors the exhibition. Consisting of a slide show with two carousels, it demonstrates formally similar yet temporally distinct moments in history. In one pair, a slide of Che Guevara's corpse surrounded by Bolivian officers is presented with Rembrandt's famous painting *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632. Rendering disparate similar, Kruij suggests a tautological repetition of history.

Countering Kruij's slides, **Vivienne Westwood** and artist **Scott King** respectively embellish images of Che Guevara. Both artworks play with the revolutionary leaders' silhouette. Westwood adorns a Rembrandt self-portrait with Guevara's famous accessories, while King makes a verbal pun by superimposing the beret of Che onto actress/singer Cher.

On the opposite wall hangs a pair of Jessica Simpsons. These double images function like Warhol's silkscreen diptychs: repetition neutralizes the potency of the pop icon. In his frenetic composition, **David Perry** blends together the Hollywood pin-up with the famous Iraq POW, Jessica Lynch. Countering this travesty, **Ida Ekblad** adorns the same Jessica Simpson with a piece of pink chewing gum. Pasted to Simpson's eye, it functions both as an eye patch and an eye-catcher.

Between this sister act, *Neon Cross for Two*, by **Jonathan Horowitz**, plays with another icon. Horowitz serializes the Cross, making it a thing to share. This simultaneously advertises a duality of religions and questions their authenticity. The buzzing of this neon "sign" reminds viewers that religious iconography is not so distant from pop.

Looming above the exhibition space, a wall clock by **Jens Haaning** seems to run ahead of time or to be simply out of order. As the wall label reveals, the clock runs according to *Baghdad Time*. Its counterpart is the "Big Crunch Clock" of **Gianni Motti**. Named for the time separating the sun from its explosion, the clock calculates the five billion years until the end of the world. Peace wallpaper by **Fia Backström** neutralizes these time bombs. A text piece, "What is Left to do? What is the Right thing to do?" by the same artist summarizes the leitmotif of the show, the confusion of opposites, "Using the left to be right, chic radicality." In muddling the delineation of styles, missions and sides, ultimately, good news collides with bad news.

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