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HOUSEWARMING

November 8 - December 23 2006

The **SWISS INSTITUTE** (SI) is pleased to present the first exhibition curated by its new director.

HOUSEWARMING brings together a group of international emerging artists producing work that refers explicitly to the arrangement and designation of space. Mounting shows means continuously moving objects in and out of rooms. They are installed with great care, only to be removed again a few weeks later. The presence of changing artworks actually constitutes new space. In the slender volume 'Art and Space', Martin Heidegger proposes an unexpected inversion to the conventional reading of space. To discover a space's essence, we must think of it as active, constituting itself by the presence of its contained objects.

Agnieszka Brzezanska (Poland) presents photographs and videos in which she turns brief episodes into atmospheric images of great intensity. The films, titled *Home Videos*, both clarify and muddy the waters mediating between poetry and grotesquerie. As the political climate in Poland is not art friendly at all, Brzezanska and her friends celebrate small parties in their living rooms, staging improvised plays and recalling artistic bohemian lifestyle.

Metaphorical qualities are inherent in the installations of **Vincent Kohler** (Switzerland). His fireplace entitled *Foyer*, contains a fire that has been extinguished, which rotates magically. In an appropriate play on words for HOUSEWARMING, the French word for fireplace, foyer, also means home.

In his video piece, *Clapping Music Santiag Interpretation*, Kohler makes a twisted version of composer Steve Reich's famous *Clapping Music*, bringing together two famous and opposed American inventions, cowboy boots and minimal music.

David Renggli (Switzerland) presents the installation *The Night It Suddenly Got Bright Again*. Renggli often works with furniture and domestic items, piling them up to create incongruous compositions. Exaggeration and irony are key elements of his aesthetic language, with an aim to build physical oxymorons. Absurdity is deliberately administered to the everyday - sometimes beyond recognition. His installation *The Night It Suddenly Got Bright Again* is a domestic reinterpretation of the chiaroscuro of Baroque paintings. The sawdust forms a beam of light that enters the darkness of the bourgeois interior.

Damien Roach (UK) alters reality through subtle interventions. In his video piece *Meanwhile*, Roach loops a short scene from the movie *Dazed and Confused*. By playing it back and forth, Roach creates infinite space, inhabited by a moonstruck girl constantly looking towards the nocturne sky.

In his piece *Eidolon*, the tipped-over coffee table at first looks sullied; but closer inspection reveals coffee stains in the form of palm trees. Through the hidden motif a shift in scale occurs, transforming the tabletop into a vista.

Jenny Vogel (US and Germany) weaves history and contemporary media as a method to re-interpret meaning. In the piece *Translating Tragedy III (Emptiness is - is not nothing)*, Vogel enters into a multi-media dialogue with Martin Heidegger, responding and playing off his musings about how art functions within and defines space. Her reinterpretation breaks the homogenous power formula of the text and its famous author and makes them suddenly approachable.

Michael Beutler (Germany) presents the installation *Untitled Until Further Notice*, which is constructed as a direct reaction to the exhibition space. Instead of placing an object within space and closing it, Beutler created a machine that allows the floor to be leveled and make it into a ceiling, alternating between these two functions. The movable platform is counterbalanced with seven boxes filled with sand. The force needed to shift it, is to be built up by stepping on the rounded latter. As Beutler's machine is not in use, it oscillates between functionality and pure fiction.

The collective **Uglycute** (Sweden) create a pastiche of good taste Swedish modernistic design with furniture that function more on a social level than as an eye catcher. The three wedges are multifunctional and can be used either as sitting platform, bookshelf or pin board. In their simple making and archaic look they have a massive presence. Diagonally mounted wood boards contrast synthetic cushions made out of black foam that magically hold on the lacquered surface.