

Nina Könnemann

October 6 - November 18, 2006
Opening on Friday, October 6, 2006, 7 – 9 p.m.
Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Elisenstr. 4-6

In the past Nina Könnemann (* 1971) has produced documentary-like films that invert traditional notions of narrative, time and place where the centre of action is all but occluded, promoting instead the periphery, the off-action to the forefront in such works as "M.U.D." (2003), "Unrise" (2002) and "Castles made of Sand" (2004). Here, for her first solo exhibition at Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Könnemann presents two new works, entitled "Typhoon" and "Talon" (2006) that ostensibly do away with any sense of place altogether, where utter dislocation from an event becomes the location of the films.

The films were shot with a hand-held stills camera using more than 1800 images each and focus on two sets of four Hollywood film posters attached to a wall in a vertical grid-like grouping: "Ring 2", "The Core", "Signs" and "Open Water" for "Typhoon", and "The Fog", "Pearl Harbour", "The Dark", and "Perfect Storm" for "Talon". Both works cite recent horror, war and science fiction genre films, the kind of films that employ ever-new modes of special effects, which are effectively missing from Könnemann's deceptively rough-hewn camerawork. "Typhoon" is shot in bright, lurid colour: earthy oranges and fiery reds against deep blue horizons and bottomless black depths; and although both films are in colour, "Talon" suggests night-time, a silvery monochromatic twilight landscape, yet they both possess a dreadful sense of the unknown. The films are titled after roller coasters, wherein their camera movement originates: the artist has reproduced their respective circuits to produce the films' action, paralleling, most significantly, the duration of each with the duration of the individual amusement park rides themselves, where a 'close-up' signals the ride's nearness to earth, whilst a 'long shot' suggests height.

Technical description aside, experiencing the films warrants, indeed demands, an altogether different understanding. Conceptually, the artist has mapped two forms of entertainment: the theme park ride and the cinema, or more concretely, has simulated the movement of a roller coaster against the ground of a group of film posters, where the action of the former engenders the experience of the latter, and where the lure of publicity becomes an image of the film itself. Experiencing these films is like being there as they instil the feeling of parasympathetic response: we feel the vertiginous highs and lows of the ride but with no real, physical mooring to harness visually, only snatches of the digitally-produced posters that our minds attempt to perceive, an artificial, fantasy terrain to negotiate. Indeed, through the artifice of simulated motion—invariably what comes to mind is that instance at the peak of an incline and the sense of ensuing dread of what lies below—we encounter more obstacles, more visual hindrances that can only further displace our understanding of time and place: glitches, glares and folds. Initially, these technical 'flaws' disturb or 'hurt' the gaze of the viewer by creating blind-spots, spaces that unforgivingly reflect from within and without. These spaces suggest a different technique of seeing: these visual impediments return us back to the medium as mediated media.

David Bussel