

KATHARINA JAHNKE / KOSTIS VELONIS «BLIND DATE»

Opening Friday, 14th October 2005, 7pm – 9pm

Exhibition 15th October – 17th December 2005

Opening times Tue - Sat 11am - 6pm

In the exhibition “blind date” by Kostis Velonis (*1968 in Athens) and Katharina Jahnke (*1968 in Berlin) two artists meet, who had not previously known each other, and who live in different cultures. What connects them are their works, which describe elementary human feelings and needs, not limited by borders. Jahnke and Velonis are interested in socio-political change, the media or personal experiences, which not uncommonly evoke a canon of fears, paranoia and longings. The artists work with the simplest, often found, materials, which are consciously imperfect and disclose the process of production.

At the centre of the project “hazards” by Katharina Jahnke are places as the point of departure for certain longings, for particular rules of behaviour, and as a measure for good and evil. Using her three media - sculpture, drawing and cloth banners - she builds an associative web of quotations and images, which circle around mechanisms of fear and their implication in setting limits, in the actual as well as figurative sense.

In a series of drawings Katharina Jahnke lexically puts together covers from old issues of a travel magazine (Merian) to form a picture of the world, which painfully recalls the time it was possible to discover the world in an idealistic and carefree way. In the mean time all the countries illustrated on the cover have been put on a list of dangerous locations to visit. There is not only a narrative factor contained in the process of meticulously copying the covers. For the artist it is also a way of working through her own fears and paranoia.

The sculptures entitled “Barricades” push in-between spaces into the foreground - the space separating safety from danger, good from evil. In the choice of materials, such as shards of mirror glass, most of the sculptures involve a direct danger in themselves, they only show details, manipulate and fragment the gaze, and dissolve limits to produce a confusing effect for the viewer. The viewer is left on uncertain ground and finds himself facing a banner giving instructions like: “don’t show gory pictures”, “cigarette lights can become targets” and “stay alert”.

Also Kostis Velonis’ project “October or La Bohème est un pays triste”, functions as a cultural as well as personal metaphor for a view of the world marked by history, and a life determined by fears and longings. His starting point is the modern period and the way in which its principles are filtered through diverse social and cultural conditions in art as well as domestic life. For this he uses a suggestive language. With the combination of ready-mades and his own constructions, he plays with the familiar, which provokes a spectrum of associations.

In the exhibited works Kostis Velonis makes connections between, among other things, ideas of Bohemia and Russian Constructivism. Here the artist is particularly interested in the coexistence of myth and reality, of visions of the Russian avant-garde and the Communist system. In the work “Un monsieur qui a mange du taureau (For the red Army There are No Obstacles)” he focuses on the phenomenon of the Soviet Union being capable of absorbing history and constructing a new one. The complex and multi-layered sculpture reflects the viewer’s need to understand history in all its aspects, while the latter remains, however, fragmentary and illegible. “Space Loneliness” humorously evokes the tragic experience of solitude. Imprisoned in an abandoned and partially destroyed spaceship, technological progress becomes an absurd condition.

The view of the world from two very individual perspectives - geographical, historical and personal - and the combination of these two positions is the experiment to be continued on the 17th November in the gallery The Breeder in Athens.