

## CORNELIA SCHMIDT-BLEEK DER MONDBERICHT

OPENING FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2009, 6 – 9 PM

EXHIBITION JANUARY 31 – MARCH 14, 2009, TUES – SAT 11 AM – 6 PM

An X-ray satellite conducting astronomical observation in the dark expanse of outer space has confirmed that 99 percent of the universe is invisible and that 90 percent of this area consists of particles that have never before been seen on earth. This leaves a multitude of questions unanswered, a great many secrets undisclosed and numerous possibilities open.

In the exhibition *Der Mondbericht (The Moon Report)*, Cornelia Schmidt-Bleek takes on a search for the invisible. Drawing upon her family's scientific lineage, she researches and classifies the world in her very own manner. The starting point for this exhibition was a scientific study written by the artist's grandfather, Karl Georg Schmidt, entitled *Der Mondbericht*, which was published in 1949. This book focused on the relation between continental drift and the formation of the moon. For quite some time a revolution had been occurring at the microscopic level. Miniscule bits smaller than the naked eye could see were discovered with the help of refined instruments and theories, opening up new worlds of unbelievable dimensions to human perception. With the aid of micro and macro-optics in photography, the landscape of the invisible greatly expanded.

In the work of Cornelia Schmidt-Bleek, too, the moon becomes an experimental plane. These pieces are based on light, dust, darkness, knowledge and the possibilities of their representation. The artist examines the relationship between photography and drawing, two artistic techniques which have played a significant representational role in the field of the natural sciences. In the piece *Firsoff: Stage III*, Cornelia Schmidt-Bleek plays on Swedish physicist V.A. Firsoff's cartographic studies of the moon. As an amateur scientist, Firsoff created the so-called *Moon Atlas* in 1961, which deliberately employed the medium of drawing as opposed to photography as means to depict the landscapes of the moon's surface. In the form of a large series of photograms, Cornelia Schmidt-Bleek refashions this primary source using sand and salt, creating landscapes which become, in turn, unique photographs. Another work uses the lens and light of a slide projector to enlarge basalt dust, a material used by NASA as an imitation of moon dust. The mystical, abstract image cast onto the wall likens a moon landscape. In the entryway to the gallery, a cabinet of moon legends and curiosities is assembled. Photobooth pictures, a tile, an engraved glass plate and drawings create a web of anecdotes and free associations that play upon factual knowledge, thereby opening a view onto the surface of the moon which is no longer scientifically verifiable.