

JOS DE GRUYTER & HARALD THYS: DAS LOCH

Opening: Saturday May 21, 2011, 8pm

Exhibition: May 27 – July 10, 2011

The NAK. Neuer Aachener Kunstverein proudly presents “Das Loch”, the first institutional solo exhibition in Germany of Brussels-based artists Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys.

Since the 1980s the artists have collaborated together producing work spanning a wide range of media including film, photography, installation, performance, and drawings. Making use of kitsch objects that push the limits of taste, and lower middle-class status symbols and their associated notions of consumption, Jos de Gruyter (*1965 in Geel, Belgium) and Harald Thys (*1966 in Wilrijk, Belgium) create a world whose protagonists we believe to know, but who appear more bizarre than usual. The static world of things, parts of which are fetishized, depicts a bogged-down form of the everyday, which expands into an ominously absurd take on the world.

The exhibition “Das Loch” at the NAK. Neuer Aachener Kunstverein is a commemoration of the fictional personality of the painter Johannes (1947-2010). Chimes, a golden light shining through ornamental glass, and a rug that dampens the sounds of footsteps completely transform the exhibition spaces into a mausoleum. Johannes is laid out in a vitrine. Presented in the upper floor is the eponymous video *Das Loch* (2010). Puppets, dummies, and a stuffed vulture appear in numerous scenes. The monologues of the actors, spoken in distorted, computerized voices, interrupt the tension generated by the absolutely immobile camera. Johannes speaks: *“May the Lord bless you and await you on the shore of life swathed in light. Now, that the death of all that is mortal knocks upon your door and calls you forth from the land that nourishes you, from the circle of people with whom you have lived. May He ease your departure and dispatch his angel to your side, to accompany you through the unknown gate of death and lead you to the promised land where the sun never sets.”*

As an extension of the show at NAK, kestnergesellschaft in Hannover presents the exhibition “Objekte als Freunde”. Here a video work is displayed in which Johannes’ theory on color is explained. The monologue, illustrated via circular, colored surfaces, contrasts with the rest of the exhibition: installed on twenty-one partitions are 168 large-format photographs depicting the dusty objects, seemingly devoid of content. Works by Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys were last presented in a solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel (2010), Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin (2008), FRAC Ile-de-France/le Plateau, Paris, and Artspeak, Vancouver (both 2007), as well as in numerous group exhibitions including among others the 5th Berlin Biennale and Manifesta 7, Trento (2008).

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Tues-Sun, 2–6pm