

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## *Irrational thoughts should be followed logically:*

Anthony Howard, Simon Dybbroe Møller, Pernille Kapper Williams, Lasse Schmidt Hansen, Anja Schwörer, Kerstin Stoll

Curated by Philipp Ziegler

May 18 – June 24, 2006

Elizabeth Dee is pleased to announce the upcoming group exhibition *Irrational thoughts should be followed logically* with works by Anthony Howard, Simon Dybbroe Møller, Pernille Kapper Williams, Lasse Schmidt Hansen, Anja Schwörer and Kerstin Stoll. The exhibition is curated in collaboration with Philipp Ziegler and Galerie Reinhard Hauff in Stuttgart, Germany. The exhibition will open on Thursday, May 18 with a reception for the artists from 6–8 pm and will run through June 24, 2006.

The title of the exhibition *Irrational thoughts should be followed logically*, quotes the fifth sentence in Sol LeWitt's *Sentences on Conceptual Art*, first published in 1969. The exhibition shows works by six emerging artists primarily from Denmark and Germany – some of whom, such as Pernille Kapper Williams and Lasse Schmidt Hansen, finished their studies at the renowned art academy Städelschule in Frankfurt this year. All six artists work with the conceptual aspects of 'formalism' as it relates to forms of presentation and participated in the recent exhibition *Formalismus* in the Hamburger Kunstverein in 2004. In addition, the artists share an interest in the now neglected utopian, irrational side of modern art, which Sol LeWitt in the first of his famous 'Sentences' described with the words: "Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach."

Transcending the tradition that, in its questioning of the artwork as a closed, physically present entity, solely deals with the semantic discrepancy between concept and execution, this next generation of artists is less concerned with the inherited reading of modern art than with exactly those fractures and byways of modernism in which its utopian dimensions surface. Common for these artists is a fascination with the inheritance from minimalism and conceptual tendencies of the 1960s, a weakness for conceptual gestures and an abstract formal vocabulary. The obvious contradiction contained in the title, to 'logically' follow 'irrational thoughts', can thus be

considered as programmatic for the exhibited works. Because precisely in the turning back to the mystical quality of art, emphasised in the writings of Sol LeWitt, the intrusion of the real – references to fashion, everyday life, design or popular culture – can be implemented in abstract images.

While **Anja Schwörer** in her seemingly esoteric paintings, made by bleaching and dyeing black canvas, thematises spiritualist levels of meaning in abstract art and mathematics, **Simon Dybbroe Møller**, in the three photographs *still untitled*, stages an improvised appropriation of aesthetic principles from a photographic documentation of a work situation in his studio. In her text works that are reminiscent of visual poetry and the experimental design of early conceptual art, **Pernille Kapper Williams** deals with different typographies and forms of presentation. On one of the 16 pages making up the work *Untitled*, for example, the corresponding pair of words ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ are positioned so that ‘inside’ is written in the o of ‘outside.’ Thus the result is a formal spatial composition that all but makes a visual double to the linguistic content. Her mirror work *Untitled Picture* is a re-make of the work *Untitled Painting* by Art & Language, which she has altered so that the size of the mirror relates exactly to her body size. **Lasse Schmidt Hansen** will be represented by works on paper and the sculpture *Notes on Site-Specificity*, which consists of Barcelona stools designed by Mies van der Rohe placed at an angle to each other in the exhibition space. The apparently arbitrary placement of the stools thwarts the strictly geometrical positioning along the wall that was originally intended by Mies van der Rohe for his Barcelona Pavilion. The large format ink jet prints by **Kerstin Stoll** oscillate between northern light and rayonism; through their extraordinarily dense surface structure they possess a curious power of attraction. Her ‘Basilisk’ table sculpture of burned clay covered in a metallic glossy glaze alludes to meditation objects of the Far East and on alchemical experiments. The New York artist **Anthony Howard** mocks the visual clichés of a modernism that is frozen into pure formulaic pathos in his parody on early performance and body art. His 16 mm film *Oui We*, which he made for his graduate thesis at PRATT Institute in New York, thus seems, as is the case with the whole exhibition, to confirm Sol LeWitt’s third sentence: “Irrational judgements lead to new experience.”

About the artists:

**Anthony Howard**, born 1976, lives and works in New York. Since the making of the *Oui We* as a thesis film at PRATT Institute, NY, Anthony Howard has been mostly making performance-based videos. Works like *The Degenerate Artist*, *Clown of God*, *Emotional Man* and *Retard Art* are brought together on compilation tapes in edition (*Anthony Howard’s Video Jerk Off* and *The Anthony Howard likes himself – a lot Video*). Besides this he works on documentaries about underground and street culture like *B.I.K.E.* and *Streetball*. His first gallery show in Europe took place in December 2003 at Ellen de Bruijne Projects in Amsterdam. He was represented by Ellen de Bruijne Projects at Art Forum Berlin 2004 and 2005, Loop Barcelona 2004 and Liste ’05 Basel. His first museum show took place in March 2005 at the Badische Kunstverein in Karlsruhe, Germany. Anthony Howard is represented by Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam. **Pernille Kapper Williams**, born 1973 in Odense, Denmark, is concerned with the surface of things, the evocative power of the name and economic strategies of seduction. However, her examination of these concepts that promise glamour is neither affirmative nor based on a simple critique of commodity aesthetics. Rather, her conceptual approach distils the visual potentials of

contemporary product aesthetics into an abstraction that, freed from any conventional relation to products, becomes accessible to reoccupation. The text and letter works by Pernille Kapper Williams that are shown at the Elizabeth Dee Gallery, makes the form of the presentation itself their theme and plays with relational or oppositional couplings, which takes up methods of concrete poetry as well as typographic design of early conceptual art. From 2002 to 2006 Pernille Kapper Williams studied with Simon Starling at the Städelschule in Frankfurt. In 2005 she participated in the exhibition *Therefore Beautiful* at the Ursula Blickle Foundation in Kraichtal, *Wer von diesen sieben...* in the Studiogalerie in Kunstverein Braunschweig. In 2006 she showed in the exhibition space Ritter&Staiff in Frankfurt and was awarded the 'Absolventenpreis' at the exhibition *The Graduates* at the Städelmuseum in Frankfurt.

**Kerstin Stoll** was born in 1969 and lives and works in Hamburg, Germany, where she studied at the art academy until 1999. In her works – mostly works on paper, installations and sculptures – she refers to exemplary natural forms that recall mysterious primordial elements, black monoliths, crystalline honeycombs or supernatural light phenomena. In her work, strictly rationalist technical methods merge with utopian and mystical content. "In my artistic discussion I examine and use those imaginations of past ideas of future references. The Utopias of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries didn't create any longer an ideal state outside of the real space: no place, nowhere. They were Utopias of an ideal condition as an end of the history." In 2005 Kerstin Stoll exhibited in, amongst other shows, *Alles in einer Nacht* at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York and *Suburbia* in Kunstverein Springbornhof. Her next solo exhibition will be at the Galleria Laurin in Zürich in autumn 2006.

**Anja Schwörer**, born 1971, lives and works in Berlin. From 1997 to 2003 she studied at the academy of fine arts in Karlsruhe. Her mostly large format, black images are made by dyeing or decoloring the canvas. Their imaginary image material uses formal elements that refer to the esoteric, ornamental and the formal language of abstract art in the early twentieth century. Her working method is to scratch her mostly geometrical compositions into a wax coating applied to the black canvas, as in an etching, then treat the canvas with bleach and in the end dye it again. With this method, she creates extraordinarily intense images whose unique effect results from the connection of spiritual and material aspects. Anja Schwörer has participated in, amongst other exhibitions, *Splendor Geometrik* at Galerie Gisela Capitain in Cologne (2003), *Let there be Light* at Consortium Düsseldorf (2004) and *Square Dance* at Galerie Jackie Strenz in Frankfurt (2005). Anja Schwörer is represented by the gallery Hammelehle and Ahrens in Cologne, where she had her latest solo show in spring 2006.

**Simon Dybbroe Møller** was born in 1976 in Århus in Denmark and studied from 2001 to 2005 with Tobias Rehberger in the Städelschule in Frankfurt. In his work he uses a conceptual approach around which a dense net of art historical, literary and architectonic references are spun. In an article in Frieze, Dominic Eichler has described his work as follows: "Simon Dybbroe Møller's working method offers a welcome alternative to thinking about art history as a daunting public library with strict rules for readers. For him it's a place to browse – more like an idiosyncratic second-hand bookshop in which the filing and cataloguing have gone a bit awry here and there. It is these odd corners, where mysticism can be found rubbing shoulders with volumes on Conceptual art, Pop music and Concrete poetry, that he produces his best, most free-spirited work." After being awarded the prize for the 'Best Freestyle Stand' with his stand with Galerie Kamm at the Art Forum Berlin in 2004, Simon Dybbroe Møller has exhibited at Kunstwerke in Berlin, Städtischen Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, the Halle zur Kunst Lüneburg, the ZKM in Karlsruhe, the Studiogalerie in Kunstverein Braunschweig, Galerie

Christian Nagel in Berlin and Galerie Reinhard Hauff in Stuttgart, amongst others. In 2006 he will have solo shows at the Aachener Kunstverein and in Künstlerhaus Bremen. For 2007, solo exhibitions are planned at Århus Kunstbygning and at westlondonprojects. At Art Basel, 2006 Galerie Kamm will represent him with a Statement stand. Simon Dybbroe Møller is represented by Galerie Kamm in Berlin.

**Lasse Schmidt Hansen** was born in 1978 in Albertslund, Denmark and lives and works in Frankfurt, where he has studied with Tobias Rehberger at the Städelschule since 2003. The works of Lasse Schmidt Hansen follow a conceptual approach in which the ideas of seriality, sequence and variation play a big role. The references to minimal sculpture that are conjured up through the serial arrangement of design objects such as globe lamps, chairs or the well-known Ikea *Billy* bookcase, are complemented by the pragmatic dimension of the objects as functionalistic items of everyday consumption. In this sphere of closeness and familiarity with the everyday reality of the beholder, Lasse Schmidt Hansen's works act from the creative decision between norm and deviation. This can, for example, be seen in his work *Billy 1/294.346.752* that lets the classic mistakes made by millions of consumers in building Ikea furniture be reconstructed. Lasse Schmidt Hansen has mathematically calculated that there are over 294 million different possibilities to build the bookcase, which consists of only 12 parts. Lasse Schmidt Hansen has exhibited at Grazer Kunstverein and at the KBH Kunsthal in Copenhagen this year.

-Phillipp Ziegler translated by Eva May