

For Immediate Release:

Francis Ruyter

*I Am a Camera*

13 April through 13 May 2006

"I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed."

(Christopher Isherwood, from *Goodbye to Berlin*, 1939)

Team Gallery will present an exhibition of new paintings by Francis Ruyter from the 13th of April through the 13th of May 2006. The gallery is located at 527 West 26th Street, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, on the ground floor.

Francis Ruyter's *I Am a Camera* is a homecoming of sorts. It marks a return to the colorlessness of some of his early work, a return to the self-portraiture that concerned him throughout the early nineties, and a return to Team, a gallery which he co-founded in Chelsea ten years ago. Ruyter, who has been living and working in Vienna over the past few years, is also here having his first New York solo in almost four years.

Known for his combative use of color in serial renderings of such subject matters as cemeteries, couture shows and drunken party scenes, Ruyter has here stripped his signature style down to its barest components. The twist comes from two departures: the first is the rejection of color, the second the intensely autobiographical subject matter. This is a Francis Ruyter show where he has painted Francis Ruyter only, while restricting his palette to black and white.

By jettisoning the color, and focusing on his own image, Ruyter foregrounds his paintings' primary subject matters: the photographic and the autobiographical. Since 1996, Ruyter's paintings have been based on individual photographs taken by the artist and have, therefore, formed a map of his movements around the globe — his personal development. The photographs, although casual, are always intentional; they are always fodder for the paintings — one could not imagine him photographing scenes for mere nostalgic consumption.

Since last summer, Ruyter has been taking photographs of himself, in certain cases using mirrors, in others a timer and sometimes, simply, holding the camera as far away from his body as possible. Ruyter then selects a small percentage of these pictures and begins the process of fixing them in the medium of painting. He "transcribes" the photographs onto the picture plane, selects the areas of the image that he wishes to render, leaving out details he thinks trivial, while focusing on others. Once the paintings have been drawn in, Ruyter begins to map out colors (in this case, eleven differing values of gray), filling in his own drawings. The final fixing of the images occurs when Ruyter, usually in a single sitting, redraws the lines with a paint pen, bringing the painting into sharp focus.

The artist has shown his work in galleries and museums the world over. Ruyter participated in MoMA's *Projects 77* and in PS1's original version of *Greater New York*. This is the 37-year-old's 23rd solo show.

For further information and/or photographs please call the gallery at 212.279.9219. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm.