


kunst halle fridericianum

the far side

June 28 – July 16 and September 2 – October 3, 2006*

Henry VIII's Wives | Jens Kloppmann | Susanne Kutter | Julien Maire | Pia Maria Martin

Looking at art sometimes reveals a people's world to us that is as uneven, odd or absurd as we already might have feared it could be. This would be bad news insofar as we are normally seeking to get our lives straight by means of our knowledge and our judgement. Only clearness makes us feel safe and maintains our capacity to act – that is what we believe in, and therefore we always want to be up on the things going on around us. However, it is not of art's business that we finally learn about the truth, and to be honest, this would be a historical misunderstanding of the ideas of enlightenment. Though most artists share a general human curiosity on the existence and the world, it becomes obvious that art in particular does not explain the things, but, facing the world's mysteriousness, often turns into an expression of astonishment. Contrariwise, the everyday visual culture, accompanying all aspects of modern life and determined by the mass media, has been a main source of knowledge in society since several decades. Unfortunately, most of the people are still not familiar with the nature of those images, which are delivered continuously to everybody by posters, magazines, television and internet. Already in the 1920s, television has not even been in sight, Siegfried Kracauer said about the upcoming 'visual age': there has never been an era knowing so much and at the same time so few about itself. One does not have to be a professional in media studies to realize that this apparent contradiction has increased until today.

The artists participating in this exhibition do not analyse what we would call the truth. They rather reshape ideas and images like those, which are already taking part in the common social process of creating and communicating knowledge and opinion. These images could for example derive from journalism, art or advertising, or they could be results of the imaging technologies in science. In some works the original manufacturing process either has been reversed or it has been taken literally. Others represent a conjunction of rather unlike imageries. But mainly, the artists make a shift in understanding images, sometimes playful, sometimes by using subtle irony or sometimes with appreciation for absurdity. These transformations not only can create new subjects. The works also embody new contradictions, but not dogmatic or in order to unmask them to us. Obviously, all this rather happens productively, with enjoyment and not at least with art's absolute freedom of expanding the visual forms of expression. And if the viewer would like to share the astonishment, he may discover that even the apparently clearest things also have a far side, and, of course, that imagery can create reality. Paul Feyerabend, professor of philosophy of science and admirer of Marcel Duchamp by the way, said it like this: "There is nothing to be said against rationality, as well as I do not dislike roast pork. But I do not wish to spend my live eating nothing but roast pork every day."

* Summerbreak: July 17 – September 2, 2006