

ROBERT KUSMIROWSKI

18th November 2006 – 11th February 2007

The Polish artist Robert Kusmirowski (*1973) is known for his (time) intense stagings of places and spaces of past times. Using simple materials the artist creates meticulous simulations which appear to the eye like perfect replicas of places and objects. These spaces of the past, so carefully transferred and combined with the present, make his installations appear to have broken through the principle of irreversible time. The installations are pervaded by a nostalgia which, however, does not fall victim to melancholy romanticism. Instead, they are treated with the reflective notion of nostalgia implemented by the language and literature theorist Svetlana Boym. No attempt is made to re-establish the past, but rather to reflect upon an individual and collective relationship to time and history. For the solo exhibition in the migros museum für gegenwartskunst Robert Kusmirowski had produced, in a spatially comprehensive installation, a mysterious research centre – recalling the Soviet technology dream during the Cold War.

Always sites of abandonment, Robert Kusmirowski's room stagings, and dereliction are surrounded by an aura of the uncanny – aroused by the presence and patina of a present transferred into the past and a human absence, the existence of which is substituted by signs. The theatrical stagings however do not lose ground to a naked aesthetic-illusionist representation of surfaces. The works are fascinating far more through their narrative potential, the individual and collective histories they circulate, the fiction, reality linked to one's own imagination.

For the work «D.O.M.» Robert Kusmirowski constructed a part of a cemetery and transferred it into the exhibition space. The impression from the display side is one of perfect illusion, concealing the nature of the materials use for the gravestones; cardboard, wood and polystyrene. «D.O.M.» stands for a remembrance of a Polish cemetery of the 18th - 19th century as it would appear today. The staging of a graveyard as memento mori per se, brings to mind how through societal tabooisation the culture of death and mourning is buried in oblivion. The Vanitas theme itself is set in opposition to the clean and neutral strivings of the White Cube, particularly as the cemetery, the place which embodies this topos par excellence, is presented in an aged and weathered state. As with many of Kusmirowski's works the cemetery too, is not accessible and is only viewable from one display side therefore becoming a hybrid oscillating between an illusionistic graphic quality and real three dimensionality.

At the Kunstverein in Hamburg Kusmirowski created in 2005 the room installation «The Ornaments of Anatomy». The dark study room of the fictive figure Dr. Vernier, a manic doctor permits an anticipation of the horrible. Strange scientific classifications and anatomic drawings adumbrate mysterious and uncanny medical studies were carried out. As with «D.O.M.» and other of the artist's installations, this place too, offers a locus for reflection – in a most literal way, in a study – and at the same time is fully materialised. Kusmirowski (re)produces not just objects and places, but also spatialised and concretised atmospheres, associations and psychologies. In 2006 the art figure Dr. Vernier's laboratory had more rooms added to the installation, such as an operating theatre and library furthering the nightmarish whole between madness and science.

The installation produced for the migros museum für gegenwartskunst stages an old research centre furnished with mysterious objects. The work is made up of various zones – quite in keeping with how such a place could appear. The installation recalls the fantasies of omnipotence and technological utopias prevalent during the cold war years. Simultaneously the rooms auger something inscrutable and threatening.

!INFORMATION!

For further information please refer to the curator of the exhibition: Heike Munder.

Family guided tour – for children of 5 and above accompanied by adults.

Together with museum pedagogue Brigit Meier a journey will be made in the replicated world of Robert Kusmirowski. The tour will take place on Sunday, 10th December 2006 from 1.30pm – 2.30pm. Applications are not necessary.

!SCREENING: CONCEPTUAL PARADISE!

On 2nd December 2006 in the arthouse cinema Le Paris, Zürich, the film «Conceptual Paradise» by the artist and art historian Stefan Römer will be shown. The film documents debates which emanated from «Concept Art» in the 1960s. Stefan Römer investigates concept art as an historical construct and the touchstone of a critically directed contemporary art via interviews with contemporary artists such as Vito Acconci, Michael Asher or Baldwin & Mel Ramsden.

The project is in cooperation with the migros museum für gegenwartskunst, Zürich, the Art History Institute of the University of Zürich and the postgraduate programme in Curating at the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst, Zürich (Academy for Design and Art, Zürich).

More information at: www.conceptual-paradise.com and www.migrosmuseum.ch

Public guided tours: Sunday 19th November, 3rd and 17th December, 21st January, 11th February at 3pm as well as Thursday, 30th November and 1st February at 6.30 pm.

Opening hours: Tues/Wed/Fri Midday – 6pm, Thurs Midday – 8pm, Sat/ Sun 11am – 5pm.

Bank holidays: closed on 24th and 25th December. 26th December open from 11am – 5pm. Closed on 31st December and January 1st. 2nd January open from 11am – 5pm.

migros museum für gegenwartskunst
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The migros museum für gegenwartskunst is an institution of the Migros-Kulturprozent.
www.kulturprozent.ch