

AERNOUT MIK | *Communitas*
PAUL GRAHAM | *Beyond Caring*

October 30th – December 04th 2010
Opening: 29th October 6–9 pm

On October, 29th **Aernout Mik's** new video installation *Communitas* will be presented for the first time in Germany at carlier | gebauer gallery. *Communitas* was realized in 2010 on the invitation of the Teatr Dramatyczny, in the Cultural Palace in Warsaw and premiered at the Sao Paulo Biennial in September.

Alongside Mik's new work we are happy to present a selection of photographs from **Paul Graham's** series *Beyond Caring*. The series is an early work of Graham from the mid 1980s, in which the artist introduced color photography into the genre of black and white dominated social documentary photography.

Aernout Mik's newest work *Communitas* was shot in the summer of 2010 in the Cultural Palace (Pałac Kultury i Nauki) in Warsaw on the invitation of the Teatr Dramatyczny, which is located there. The building, known for being an ambivalent ‚gift‘ of the Sowjet Union to Poland after World War II, is part of a contemporary debate, which deals with its possible demolition. *Communitas* was filmed entirely inside of this hermetically enclosed architectural structure. The title *Communitas* refers to a concept, which stems from the field of cultural anthropology and defines a sociality in its coming into being as a joined and euphoric experience of passage.

Aernout Mik's actors, composed from Polish citizens and Vietnamese migrants (and this choice of personage as well documents a present debate on inclusion and exclusion in Polish politics) have occupied the Cultural Palace. They have taken over different rooms and halls, have prepared provisional sleeping berths, are eating, debating, voting, discussing and enact countless gestures of political insurgency. Oversized posters, carrying the counterfeits of individuals are hanging from the architectonically protruding tribunes of the main hall. An air of revolutionary uprising surrounds the actions, as well as a sense of fear of an undeterminable threat from the outside: the building as a bunker, with its countless congress halls, corridors, stages, surrounded by galleries and tribunes, lined with thick textiles, reaching high up towards the ornamented and adorned ceilings in itself represents a political gesture of the past in which the megalomania of this hermetical inside is represented as political theatricality. Mik's work evokes images of political upheaval, a non-spectacular lineage of political processes and negotiations, but also drastic images as that of the hostage-taking in Moscow's Dubrowka theatre in 2002, in which the theatre became the backdrop for actions of terror and those of the state's executive forces. With *Communitas*, Mik creates a multi-referential continuum of spaces and actions, which lets frames of contemporaneity blur and leads its viewer into a self-referential delirium of political and architectural gestures.

While Mik's works are presenting conscious stagings of social and political contexts, **Paul Graham's** work *Beyond Caring* documents images of British social reality in the mid of the 1980s. This series of color photographs pictures the depressing atmosphere of British employment and welfare offices. Most of those photographs were taken covert. The low focus point of camera and the fleeting lines it evokes underline the tristesse which the ones waiting here are subjected to. With this work, Graham introduced color photography into the otherwise mainly black and white dominated genre of social documentary photography. With this, he pulled his subjects into the immediate present. Published as a book in 1986, the series *Beyond Caring* became a pamphlet against Thatcherism.

Aernout Mik was born in 1962 in Groningen in the Netherlands and now lives and works in Amsterdam. His film installations have been a regular feature in international solo and group exhibitions for over 15 years, and are also represented in numerous public collections. His key exhibitions over the last few years have included solo shows at the the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2005, Kunstverein Hannover, 2007 and Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, 2007. In 2007 he also represented the Netherlands at the Biennale in Venice. The Museum of Modern Art in New York has hosted an extensive solo show of his work in 2009. For 2011 and 2012, tour is planned including Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany, the Jeu de Paume in Paris and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

Since the mid-80s **Paul Graham's** works have been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions at venues including: the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Tate Gallery in London, the Fotomuseum Winterthur and the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg. A comprehensive retrospective of his work, which opened at the Kunstmuseum Folkwang, Essen, in 2009 and has since been travelling. It has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and is currently on view at the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg until January 2011. In 2011 the show will open at the Whitechapel Gallery, London.