

Press release

Erik Schmidt | Hunting Grounds | Arch 49 and 51

10th June – 15th July 2006, Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm
Vernissage: Friday, 9th June 2006, 6 pm

We are delighted to announce the forthcoming solo exhibition by Erik Schmidt at carlier | gebauer.

The new section in the broad sweep of Erik Schmidt's hunting cycle is entitled "Hunting Grounds". The focus is on social techniques used to stage-manage how one's own image is presented – in this case, the techniques employed by the aristocracy. Hunting in particular is a social "game", which constitutes a fixed component of representation and convention within aristocratic social interactions. Erik Schmidt lay in wait and observed the codes, apparel, locations and gestures up close.

This process gave rise to a lavishly produced 16-mm film, also entitled "Hunting Grounds". Shot in a castle in Westphalia and in the surrounding countryside, the film, composed with precise attention to even the most minute details, depicts a confusing narrative. The artist plays the lead role in the scenes, which alternate between a dinner and a hunt situation. The various tiers constantly comprise twofold meanings: the dinner is real yet at the same time is staged, with members of an aristocratic family and actors mingled and indistinguishable, and an artist producing a *mise en scène* of himself as part of a hunting group, embodying both the hunter and the hunted. In the extremely technically precise film material the artificial arrangement and the documentary perspective are so intermingled that it becomes impossible to unravel the two aspects.

The real nub of the film lies in the accumulation of familiar elements, things we have seen a thousand times before. The images based on existing visual models function like a transparent foil, which also reveals the entire framework of references embodied in the reiterated elements. However, this does not signify that there is not a cryptic side to Schmidt's pastiche process. The gamut of poses, the ambiguity of the events and the emphatic artificiality of what is depicted trigger a sense of trepidation, evoke the category of the uncanny.

In his largest painting to date Erik Schmidt turns his attention to the clichéd image of the hunt with the same virtuoso enthusiasm. "Eine Frage des Glaubens" ("A Question of Faith") (270 cm x 360 cm) picks up on the Baroque splendour of the images in the film and appears as a densely painted tableau, the thick layers of paint compacted together to produce a relief-like surface.

The film "Hunting Grounds" was produced with generous support from the GWK and the MARTa Herford Museum, which will be showing a solo exhibition by Erik Schmidt in early 2007.

For detailed press information and photos, please contact Bimal Saha at bs@carliergebauer.com or by phone +49 (0) 30 400 863-17.

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