

carlier | gebauer

Press Release

Tomasz Kowalski

May 3 – June 7, 2008

Opening: May 2, 6–9 pm

Gallery Weekend: May 3–4, 2008, 11 am – 6 pm

We are delighted to introduce Tomasz Kowalski to the public with a presentation of his work in the project space of our new gallery space on Markgrafenstrasse. Kowalski, born in Szczeczeszyn in 1984, has been studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow since 2003.

Kowalski's paintings show worlds of imagery that use the iconographic repertoire of art history to create unsettling narratives. The motifs that Kowalski combines to create new, surreal orders include Pieter Bruegel's ice-skater, Oskar Schlemmer's Bauhaus dancer, the Flemish masters' bouquet of flowers and Paul Klee's trees. In terms of technique, Kowalski's borrows from naïve art and seventeenth-century Dutch trompe-l'œil works, while his picture-in-a-picture doublings and self-citation add density to this "sampling" iconography. Historical citations provide access to the imagery, referring to the passage of time, the cycles of life and death, and the emergence and passing of icons and images.

Shades of jet black, spider webs covering or concealing motifs, and drawings on old paper create a private cosmos that extends the conspicuously two-dimensional, fleeting medium of painting to include the deep dimension of time. The images take viewers into surreal landscapes and interiors, consisting of elements of past iconographies. Kowalski calls his works *Ohne Titel* (Untitled), using painting's right to refuse to make a statement.

There is an aspect of Kowalski's painting in which the surrealism of his images comes crashing into our world: bizarre machines weave the canvases, ladders mutate into spider webs, and pictures mounted on ropes become stages. These machines exist as real sculptures, as strange functional devices assembled out of rolls, ropes, winches and frames, and they vaguely recall Marcel Duchamp's gadgets.

At this first presentation, Tomasz Kowalski will show paintings, a series of miniatures on paper and two sculptures. His first solo exhibition is scheduled for 2009.

For further information and photographs please contact Philipp Selzer at ps@carliergebauer.com or at +49 30 2400 863 0.