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Press release

Sebastian Diaz Morales | The Means of Illusion | Arch 51, 52

8th September – 20th October 2007, Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Vernissage: Friday, 7th September 2007, 6 p.m.

We are delighted to present the third gallery exhibition by Sebastian Diaz Morales (*1975 in Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina) at carlier | gebauer.

In his videos and video installations, Sebastian Diaz Morales returns over and over again to an examination of the linguistic and visual possibilities of narration. He develops an unmistakable style in these works, influenced by South American avant-garde cinema, documentary approaches and experimental films. Diaz Morales repeatedly taps into the possibilities opened up by digital processing: the original video sequences become the raw material for a practice that dissects the image, rendering it unfamiliar and recomposing it. The backdrop to his most recent works is set by plumbing the depths of how images can be read and how they relate to or reproduce reality.

Diaz Morales' four-channel video installation "Ring (The Means of Illusion)" was displayed at "Art Unlimited", this year's special Art Basel exhibition, and is now being shown in Germany for the first time along with new (video)objects. In "Ring (The Means of Illusion)" the artist assembled sequences in which violence is staged as a spectacle: a boxing match, a demonstration, an agitated crowd. The reworking of the video footage makes it impossible to adopt our habitual approaches to categorising the scenes – Diaz Morales has transformed the material into black and white images reminiscent of drawings, with the original images only filtering through as a shadowy outline. Media images are repeated, alienated and thus set at a distance from the viewer. "Ring" does not narrate a story but instead, to cite Morales, compiles "visual readings of violence".

In "Simulacrum" the artist takes a step further in developing the relationship between images and the references of these images: mirrors fragment the video footage into a thousand pieces, so that the viewer sees the splinters of the image as a bright collection of forms like those in a kaleidoscope. Diaz Morales continues his work on new modes of presenting video in conjunction with objects: the video is not shown in the usual Black Box or on a screen, but is integrated instead into an object, which also assumes the shape of a kaleidoscope. The topics addressed here gravitate around three spheres: progress, religion, or rather faith, and the alien or exotic. In four light boxes Diaz Morales builds on the notion of the "Simulacrum". The movements of the kaleidoscope are frozen: each box shows a video still, which opens up our gaze to details, yet nonetheless cannot be completely deciphered. The pictorial space remains an agglomeration of fragmentary references. The fourth light box draws attention to the role of the observer – here it is not an image that we see but instead beams of light reflected in the interior of the empty kaleidoscope.

Exhibitions| Prizes (selected): "The Man with the Bag", Miró Foundation, Espai 13, Barcelona, Spain; "HBox", (touring) Centre Pompidou, Paris; MUDAM, Luxemburg; MUSAC, León, Spain (upcoming), "Geopolíticas de la animación", CAAC, Seville, Spain; "Animated Paintings", San Diego Museum of Art, USA; "Espace Elektra", Paris, France (upcoming); "The State of the World", Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (upcoming); "A for Alibi", De Appel, Amsterdam, Netherlands

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