

Press Release

Erik Schmidt | Suitwatcher's Anonymous

July 8 – August 9, 2003

Opening: Saturday, July 5, 2003, 6 p.m.

Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

It is our great pleasure to announce the coming exhibition of the Berlin artist Erik Schmidt.

Suitwatcher's Anonymous (2003, video, 6 min.) abducts the viewer – in dreamlike, fragmented images – into the world of a young, well-dressed suit-wearer, played by the artist, who confers strenuously via conference telephone beside a swimming pool on a roof terrace. This situation of a "young urban professional", with all the accompanying lifestyle attributes, suddenly shifts when the suit-wearer falls into the pool. What initially appears to be a disaster – death by drowning – becomes lightheartedly fun play. Caressed by blue liquid, the suit-wearer sheds his shoes and jacket and, without any shortness of breath, enjoys himself under water. This poetic figure overlaps images of perfectly styled, posing suit-wearers, passing over to a third scene. In stage-like surroundings, the suit-wearer begins whipping a black leather couch with his belt until he tears the couch's surface and finally falls backward onto it with an insane expression.

The film's world of images is also the source for the four motifs of the poster series *Suitwatcher's Anonymous*. Once again, the artist stages himself in the role of the suit-wearer.

The third medium in which Schmidt takes up the theme is oil painting. He changes perspectives, putting himself behind the camera in the role of a voyeur. The images are based on studies the artist conducted in Berlin's government quarter and other places epitomized by the presence of men in suits.

"Erik Schmidt's works move between voyeurism, fashion, and the cult of the body. In them, the artist examines the relationship between fabric and body, in particular the grammar of the shaping of the male body. He plays with the ambivalence between the aesthetic of the outfit and the inner tornness of its wearer. He uses grotesque, hybrid images to deconstruct the fetishistic scenario central to fashion advertising photos. Schmidt's representations of the man are deeply disturbing and ambiguous. On the one hand, he provides space for the seductive potential of the prevailing ideal of beauty, but at the same time he shows the staginess and artifice of this ideal. The scenarios live from their ambivalence, oscillating between masquerade and transparency, anonymity and intimacy, duress and freedom." (Antje Weitzel, Berlin, 2003)

Coming exhibitions:

- 2004 "Cruising Down the Road", Brandenburgischer Kunstverein Potsdam e.V. (solo)
- 2003 "Come-in", ifa – travelling exhibition, Govett Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand (group)
"Actionbutton", new acquisitions of the German Federal Collection of Contemporary Art 2000-2003, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (group)

Sebastian Diaz Morales | A K Dolven | Tracey Emin | Michel François | Meschac Gaba | Hans Hemmert | Jonathan Hernández | Thomas Huber | Aernout Mik | Jean-Luc Moulène | Peter Pommerer | Bojan Sarcevic | **Erik Schmidt** | Christian Schumann | Thomas Schütte | Santiago Sierra | Fred Tomaselli | Sophie Tottie | Janaina Tschäpe | Luc Tuymans | Mark Wallinger