

IN THIS (OUR) COUNTRY. Art from Poland

25 November - 22 December 2005

Opening Reception: Thursday 24 November 2005, 6-8 pm

The exhibition presents works by the artists **Dorota Buczkowska** (b. 1972), **Pawel Ksiazek** (b. 1973), **Robert Kusmirowski** (b.1973), **Marcin Maciejowski** (b. 1974), **Marzena Nowak** (b.1977) and **Jan Simon** (b. 1977).

Guest Curator: Goschka Gawlik (Vienna/ Cracow)

"In this (our) country" is the first exhibition in the Vienna International Apartment with a guest curator Goschka Gawlik. She is famous for championing the Polish visual culture and regarded as one of the best connoisseurs on Polish contemporary Art inside and outside her country. during the last decade, Gawlik, perhaps more than anyone else, has contributed to the international career of many contemporary young Polish artists. With the exhibition "In this (our) country", Vienna International Apartment continues to challenge the public through the exploration and subversion of boundaries between the private and public domains.

"In this (our) country" introduces to the Finnish public the surprisingly unknown young contemporary Polish art scene. The exhibition focuses on the works of artists born in the 1970s. They all are established figures in Poland and some of them have been celebrated on the international art scene. The exposure to the contemporary art scene in Vienna, Austria has been particularly important to their careers. It was in Vienna where Robert Kusmirowski, Pawel Ksiazek, Marcin Maciejowski and Marzena Nowak first showed their works internationally and where they first received important international recognition. The Finnish exhibition organisers also became acquainted with the young Polish art in Vienna.

It is perhaps not surprising that Vienna became the place where Polish artists could raise interest and recognition. They were able to offer something new when still referring to the old. The exhibition examines how new life and art forms can arise without the decomposition and rejection of the old ones.

In Poland, the field of the old, the redundant, is preoccupied by the fatherland with its loaded history, the ostentatious catholic religion, the exaggerated consumerism, the dominance of patriarchal structures. Is it, then, possible to be authentic - that is here, "Polish" - without such national characteristics?

In the country where the reincarnated Polish citizen should be "modern-conservative", the artist, too, confronts a situation where he or she needs to negotiate a new social contract to combine the (our) old national myths with today's hybrid modernism.

This also means that although the works by the Polish artists shown in the exhibition are defined as painting, sculpture, drawing, and site-specific installation, it is not really possible to categorise them in such an explicit way.

Although the artists presented draw on their surrounding reality, they don't do it mimetically, but they create their own, often very subjective models, simulations of the realm or a sketch - aesthetic bodies seduced to pleasure, bodies that are thematic through provocative artistic action and personal approach.

The artists come to form an alliance with the media: they don't feel intimidated by the

photographers and may neatly enjoy themselves like pop and film stars and other celebrities. They may raise a whirlpool of publicity (for example, Marcin Maciejowski by his in-famous period of silence) or, like in the case of Robert Kusmirowski, they may constantly and surprisingly redefine their imago or discover fictitious histories. Such new kind of interest in artists by the media, that further revises the image of traditional art media in the society, is bound to either brutalise the current aesthetic forms of expression or present them as nostalgic or out-of-date.

Some of the works were specifically produced for the Vienna International Apartment exhibition.

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