

## STELLA HAMBERG

DISKUS DRESDNER PRODUZENTEN  
GALERIE

STELLA HAMBERG, view of the exhibition "With or without you," 2005. Polyurethane. Courtesy of Diskus, Berlin. Photo: Alex Trebus.

The new Berlin gallery Diskus represents young sculptors and painters of the Dresden School. It is presenting sculpture by Stella Hamberg, the undisputed 'shooting star' of the group. Stella Hamberg creates figures who are almost life-size, are quite realistic and yet who are fictitious. She makes entire picture spaces in which people and the surrounding objects and images are arranged like a constellation. They are worlds that always maintain a state of tension between the archaic and the contemporary. *Helen*, for example, is carrying a wooden hunting implement of the kind that Eskimos use, and *Maria* is wearing a baseball cap on her head and carrying a dead chicken in her hand.

Stella Hamberg's technique is not hyperrealistic like Ron Mueck's. And yet, something like reality is ignited by them — a mystery that is so difficult to create: a doll that opens its eyes, the eye that looks back. Stella Hamberg's figures stand in complete self-forgetfulness, absorbed in themselves and yet turning to the outside, to the world, seeming to perceive that they are being perceived. It is the moment when one becomes aware of oneself through someone else's gaze, the moment when being looked at brings us to life, triggering us to look back ourselves. And so we stand a little more erect, raise our heads slightly and look at a certain point that floats a little above the other person's head.

Stella Hamberg's figures abandon themselves completely to our gaze, without our being able to voyeuristically examine and report on them as objects. Something stops us from doing that. These statues that stand before us, so alive and so proud, so lost in their existence and at the same time presenting themselves to us with such dignity, carry within themselves the mystery that we call presence. *Birger* touches us because we recognize ourselves in him. It is this reciprocal relationship that creates consciousness for ourselves and for the other person. It is a consciousness that grows from the fact that we first lose ourselves in the other person, briefly forget ourselves in order to find ourselves again in him. There is no alternative approach to Stella's figures than to confront them with dignity and look into their eyes.

Adina Popescu

(Translated from German by Michael Robinson)



ANSELM REYLE, "Life Enigma," 2005. Exhibition view. On the left: Untitled, 2005. Mixed media on canvas, 234 x 199 x 20 cm; center: Untitled, 2005. Bronze, chrome, enamel varnish, plinth, 89 x 46 x 39 cm, plinth 70 x 50 x 50 cm; right: Untitled, 2005. Found neon light, 420 x 220 x 100 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, Berlin. Photo: Matthias Kolb.

## ALEX MORRISON

BÜRO FRIEDRICH

Contemporary art often deals with subculture according to a simplified logic of good (skaters and graffiti, for example) and evil (the exploitation of subculture by

commercial industry). My initial reaction to Alex Morrison's exhibition "St. Rebellion" at Büro Friedrich was fuelled by this prejudice, but Morrison fortunately avoids such simplifications.

In the video installation *Housework* (2002), we join a group of adolescents gathered in an apartment to make a party of its demolition. Singular acts of destruction such as a boy smashing his skateboard against a wall, repeat in a loop. Another projection focuses on the crowd of observers and individuals capturing the event with their cameras. We also witness a wall being punched from behind and plaster pouring from the ceiling. But the wall never comes down and the ceiling never bursts: *Housework* vibrates with short-circuited energy and rebellion remains within the physical frame of the self-conscious staging of the demolition.

In contrast to the private scope of the teenager's staging in the installation, in the photo series included in the exhibition, the stage is set outside and fabricated by municipal institutions. *Open Air C* (2004) depicts a graffiti contest held in a public square. At the center of Morrison's representation are the professional cameramen who come to document the event. Morrison is constantly between the roles of the observer and the protagonist. This is evident especially in *Patterer's Diary* (2002), a series of photographs of skater stories (mainly about drugs, violence and confrontations with the law) displayed alongside critical footnotes: "During these action episodes he played his part with the self-consciousness of theatrical drama [...] In reality he was plainly irresponsible." Morrison reveals himself to be a master of staging, both reflecting the political potential of street culture and employing a critical distance towards its theatrical staging. And he does so without slipping into the comfortable perspective of a black-and-white viewpoint.

Henrikke Nielsen

## ANSELM REYLE

GITI NOURBAKHSCH

Anselm Reyle's most important materials are light, color and constantly changing materials. He has used three resources lavishly for his third exhibition at Giti Nourbakhsh: neon in glowing colors, chrome, aluminum mirrors scatter flashes of light, making a shimmering effect in the gallery space.

Reyle, who lives in Berlin, is showing very different works in "Life Enigma" that thoroughly explore the possibilities of composition using color and material. A large-format variation on his strip picture sets a broad, vertical strip of yellow alongside another strip in dull green or stuck-on gold foil. The second picture is a kind of folded design made of crumpled aluminum foil, reflects a garish green neon work looks positively delicate in comparison — a kind of mobile made of neon left over from neon advertisements.

The minimalist character of these works