

DAS GROSSE NICHTS /
THE GREAT NOTHINGNESS
CHRISTIAN FROSI
THILO HEINZMANN
MARTIN HELDSTAB

February 23 to April 20, 2008
Opening: Friday, February 22, 2008, 7 p.m.

The third instalment of the Kurator 2007/2008 programme – a group exhibition called *The Great Nothingness* – will open on Friday, February 22. The title is taken from the last drawing in German architect Bruno Taut's book called *Alpine Architecture*, the latter providing the overall theme for the exhibition programme. The great void, infinite space and its likewise infinite possibilities will be the subject of focus for the three participating artists: Christian Frosi, Thilo Heinzmann and Martin Heldstab.

“Stars, worlds, sleep, death, THE GREAT NOTHINGNESS, THE NAMELESS.” It was with these words – written in a larger-than-life egg shape – that Bruno Taut concluded his visionary publication *Alpine Architecture* (1919/20). Reduced entirely to letters, the very last page provides a stark contrast to the otherwise densely filled, otherworldly drawings and makes clear that the “Great Nothingness” – infinite space – also accommodates the fullness of the “all-enveloping”.

The possibilities of space and its representation were also examined by members of the “Spacialism” movement. An “approximate” reconstruction of the Italian group's 1952 TV manifesto will be on show in the video sculpture of young Italian artist **Christian Frosi** (*1971). The Movimento Spaziale was formed by Lucio Fontana in the late 1940s. The Italian painter and his fellow-Spatialists were interested in expanding the dimensional scope of painting. They introduced new materials and techniques – in Fontana's case his famous, slit canvasses. In what Frosi has cheekily designated an “approximate” reconstruction of the *Manifesto Spazialista*, gently moving lines, light rays or reflections describe infinity in the confines of the monitor.

Light and shadow also played a role in the new group of sculptures created by Frosi for the Alte Fabrik. Traditional Chinese shadow theatre provided the inspiration for his group of flat, two-dimensional forms made of cork, which – when moved using the tiny rods attached to them – are seen becoming three-dimensional figures. Leant against small supports, the abstract sculptures contain all manner of possibilities for the play between light and shadow, for stories and figures.

Berlin-based **Thilo Heinzmann** (*1969) composes his paintings from carefully selected and combined materials: animal skin brought together with iridescent crystals.

The tension between the two different materials transcends and thereby dissolves the boundary between picture and room. At the same time, the holes and clefts inserted by the artist (in similar

but not identical similar style to the Spatialists) into the white aluminium panels appear to float out of the picture. It is in fact the light, almost transparent quality of Heinzmann's pictures that enables them to fill the room with their presence.

Swiss artist **Martin Heldstab** (*1971) likewise has a conscious system when it comes to choosing and employing his working materials. He uses subtle modifications and positional alignments to transform everyday objects. A semi-transparent plastic film placed against a wall, for example, produces a shimmering reflection of the white surface's various nuances. The "aluminium frame" is open on one side – leading out into the room. In another work, the pages of a mail-order catalogue dissolve through a punched hole and are distributed across the wall.

Lightness and transparency are a common feature of the three artists' work, as is the poetic magic that is contained in their forms. It may appear to be nothing – but it is everything.

Christian Frosi lives in Milan. He has had solo shows at the Fondazione Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2007); at Isabella Bortolozzi's gallery in Berlin (2005) and at the Galerie Zero in Milan (2003). Among upcoming exhibitions featuring his work will be *Eurasia* at the MART Rovereto in June 2008.

Thilo Heinzmann lives in Berlin. He currently has a solo exhibition at Parisa Kind in Frankfurt; in March his works will go on display at the Galerie Guido Baudach in Berlin.

Martin Heldstab lives in Basle. Among the exhibitions he has been represented at are *Poor Thing* at the Kunsthalle Basel (2007); he also had a solo exhibition at Stichting Kaus Australis, Rotterdam (2006)

FURTHER EVENTS

Thursday, 6 March, 2008, 7 p.m.

“Grosse Grüße, Dein Glaspapa”

Paul Scheerbart’s contribution to *Alpine Architecture*

Lecture

Comparative literature expert Maria Zinfert (from the Peter Szondi Institute at the Free University of Berlin) will talk about the influence that German writer Paul Scheerbart had on the development of *Alpine Architecture* and reveal links between the worlds of architecture and literature.

Thursday, 27 March, 7 p.m.

Public tour

Birgit Fritsch and Ursula Meier from the Alte Fabrik provide a guided tour of “The Big Nothingness”.

Sunday, 13 April, 11 a.m.

Art lunch for families

This new addition to the Alte Fabrik’s art education programme invites families to a special tour of the exhibition, followed by lunch. It gives children and parents alike the opportunity to enjoy a new kind of exhibition experience in an informal atmosphere.

Opening times:

Wed.- Fri. 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. / Sat.-Sun. 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.

For further information please contact Christiane Rekade, rekade@kurator.ch; www.kurator.ch

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