

“Capitulation Project” by Frédéric Moser & Philippe Schwinger

Sep. 27 - Oct. 18, 2003



The Swiss artists Frédéric Moser und Philippe Schwinger will present their new video „Capitulation Project“ together with film- and stage constructions as a Video installation at Gallery PLAY.

Moser & Schwinger aim at questioning our present according to symbols and war metaphors in the media. Their work is based on «Commune», a piece of „Performance Group“ which in New York in 1971 disrupted conventions: In the 70ies «Commune» referred to the massacre of My Lai, one of the documented atrocities of the Vietnam war. In this historic performance Moser & Schwinger discover the dimension of the allegory as difference to the images of the modern idea of “clean” war.

For their «Capitulation Project» they have chosen the fragment of the historic performance where the active integration of the audience had at this point an essential role for the further development of the situation. In 1971 „Performance Group“ experimented with four variations of this interaction. Thirty years later, Moser & Schwinger now create a fifth contemporary variation. For their shooting they reconstruct the scenery of the old performance and actors take over the role of the performer, who question the supernumerary audience in the role of a reporter, soldier and sergeant.

«Capitulation Project» will be filmed in 16 mm with live sound and last about fifteen minutes. Beyond the atmosphere of an audience incited by the provocation of the performers, beyond the eruption of simultaneous action in several places, the film will take stock of the time that has passed, and of the repetition of such atrocities. Independently from daily politics and beyond the recent American History My Lai becomes a topos, which will always concern and paralyze mankind.

The fragment of the performance, loosely based on photographic documents and reports, becomes the subject of a film. A film collage emerges, using a new language developed by the artists, which combines elements of performance as well as film.

In the presentation at PLAY gallery, the distance to the performance caused by the film will get an extensive meaning and a new spatial relation. Opposite to the large-format projection of the film will be the wooden wave which was used in the film shooting by the performer and also by the audience. Now being reserved for the gallery visitors a mirror effect will be created.