

Alexandra Bircken / Simon Denny

**An exhibition of the Ursula Blickle Foundation
September 7 – October 19, 2008**

Fabric, wool, cardboard, wood, metal: here the materials dominate the scene – spun, tacked, taped, hung, leaned, and clamped into place by Alexandra Bircken (*1967 / D) and Simon Denny (*1982 / NZ). In parallel solo exhibitions at the Ursula Blickle Foundation the two artists present subjective form and material canons that create their own idiosyncratically fragile languages. As with textiles assembled out of random fibers, here too net-like structures are developed which do not insist on following a linearity, but only merge into a oneness through the weave itself. Bircken and Denny pursue differing strategies of combination and assemblage, their work hovering somewhere between sculpture and installation.

Under the curatorial guidance of Nicolaus Schafhausen and Florian Waldvogel (Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art Rotterdam), the artists will be creating new works for the exhibition at the Ursula Blickle Stiftung. They are to be representative positions of a comprehensive group exhibition that the curators have developed as a contribution to the Brussels Biennial 2008. The Biennial addresses different aspects of modernism and makes direct reference to the Brussels World's Fair in 1958. The point of departure is the assumption that the end of the modern era is marked by a lack of any great inspiring narratives – in other words, knowledge and the resulting actions are no longer legitimized by great narratives but by the individual, who constructs his own frame of reference. This gives rise to a multitude of values and truths which are characteristic of the end of the modern age. For the exhibition at the Ursula Blickle Foundation, Nicolaus Schafhausen and Florian Waldvogel have selected two artists (Bircken/Denny) who explore the difference between narrative and scientific knowledge.

Alexandra Bircken's objects seem delicate and fragile, but at the same time they are made from down-to-earth materials: branches, wool, wood, and aluminum. Mostly they are assemblages that she brings together to create sculptures or site-oriented sculpture formations. Fabric, wool, and yarn inevitably make reference in their textile materiality to the female – a gender theme that is never explicitly addressed in the works, but which is hinted at by the materials as well as the forms. Dwellings, nests, and webs suggest a discourse about femininity; nevertheless, through the openness of Bircken's artistic form of expression, the artist does not clearly force them in this direction. The materiality and character of the objects resonate like the hybrid of a handcrafted natural entity and artificial synthesis.

Simon Denny also works with fragile constructions that accumulate in space forming idiosyncratic narrative structures. Only in these ensembles do the individual – usually mundane – objects begin, through the contrast of their forms and material characteristics, to generate a friction that produces a strange tension and at the same time order. Seeming to lack past and context, the individual objects and material elements blend into a complex ramified whole. Whereas Bircken's amorphous objects follow compositional structures, Denny's installations appear at first glance to be randomly put together, but upon closer examination one notices the many interrelated details. His materials are not "raw ingredients" taken from nature – as is often the case with Bircken – but already processed utility items taken out of their normal functional context. Both artists devote their work to the fragility that lies in the combination and arrangement of differently selected materials. Nature and the remnants of everyday objects serve them in good stead for building their own narrative structures that manifest themselves in the exhibition space and are enhanced by the viewer's own past.

Exhibition venue

Ursula Blickle Foundation
Mühlweg 18, D -76703 Kraichtal-UÖ
Phone +49 7251 60919 Fax +49 7251 68687

Curators

Nicolaus Schafhausen and Florian Waldvogel

Press information

(Please note the new telephone number!)
Katja Schroeder, Phone +49 176 23622819
presse@ursula-blickle-stiftung.de

Preopening viewing

Please call for an appointment:
Phone +49 7251 60919 Fax +49 7251 68687

Press photos

Available on our website:
www.ursula-blickle-stiftung.de

**Duration of the exhibition
September 7 – October 19, 2008**

**Opening
Saturday, September 6, 2008, 7 p.m.**

Catalogue

A catalogue will be published in conjunction with the exhibition

Opening hours

Wed. 2 – 5 p.m., Sun. 2 – 6 p.m.,
and by appointment

We'd appreciate an announcement of our exhibition in your medium. If publicized, please send us a copy for our files. Thank you!