

ANTON KERN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matthew Monahan

June 24 – July 29, 2005

June 3, 2005, New York – Like entering a *Wunderkammer*, a cabinet of curiosities, the viewer of Matthew Monahan's new exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery will be engulfed by a multitude of displays containing a variety of wax figures, paper



sculptures, ornamental drawings, and other artifacts. The work was made in the last two years, though some elements go as far back as 1994, during and after travels through Japan, Tibet, China, and Europe.

Monahan set out to excavate the ruins of his own work, to preserve and reanimate many creative fragments, all bizarrely reconfigured in pseudo-museological displays that take on a narrative and allegorical dimension. Unpainted drywall and glass vitrines stage this post-industrial, apocalyptic curiosity cabinet. A deranged arrangement of reliquaries and cracked monuments produces an effect of historical and cultural confusion, where voodoo, classicism, Buddha and modernism collide.

Monahan comments that:

the work is not a postmodern selection of references to be decoded, but a bodily expulsion of influence and impulse performed in the act of making. Art history and private history are simultaneous, in the movement of my hands... a cycle of making, breaking and fixing. It is another attempt to escape the uncanny frontality and horror of the figurative, its pathetic desire to act in real space and to look back at you. The figures are most shocking or charming when they become characters. Matchstick pupils (phosphorous vision) - materials take on a magic function, the character is fortified and abused by substances, smothered in gold, pierced by sticks, trapped in glass, ... devices to exceed the limits of the body. A brutal materiality edging towards spirituality.

Monahan's work has been exhibited in Asia, Europe and the U.S., most recently in two-person exhibitions at the Chinese European Art Center in Xiamen, China (2002), and the Bureau Stedelijk in Amsterdam (2000). His work has been included in group exhibitions at the Tent in Rotterdam, the Beaver College Art Gallery in Philadelphia, the National Center for Art in St. Petersburg, Russia, The Modern Institute in Glasgow (all 2001), and the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam (2000). This is the artist's third solo show at Anton Kern Gallery.

The exhibition opens on Friday, June 24 and will run through July 29, 2005. During the summer, the gallery is open Monday through Friday, 10 am - 6 pm. For further information and images, please contact Christoph Gerozissis or Michael Clifton at (t) 212.367.9663, (f) 212.367.8135 or email: info@antonkerngallery.com.

Exhibition after the summer break: Lara Schnitger (September 8 – October 8, 2005)

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