

ARTUR ZMIJEWSKI

Two Monuments / Democracies

October 31st – December 23rd, 2009

Opening: October 30th, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Artist Talk

Artur Zmijewski / Adam Szymczyk (director of Kunsthalle Basel)

Friday, 11th December, 6.30 p.m.

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to announce the third solo exhibition of Polish artist Artur Zmijewski, which features his latest video works *Two Monuments* (2009) and *Democracies* (2009).

Two Monuments was set in Dublin, where Zmijewski organised meetings between migrant Polish and local workers to discuss the state of the labour market. Two meetings were held, the first in November 2008 and the second in May 2009. Zmijewski invited eight men to the first workshop and six women to the second. The proposed objective was to design a "monument" that sought to represent their position in regards to the labour market, and which also incorporated their personal situations and emotions. The next step was to place these "monuments" in a public space. In his video work, *Two Monuments*, Zmijewski examines the differences between two ethnic groups and the genders. In the past, thousands of Polish migrant workers migrated to Ireland, a country that until recently was experiencing an economic boom. The project was carried out within Zmijewski's scholarship at Dublin's "Fire Station". *Two Monuments* will be on display at the Istanbul Biennale until 8th November.

Democracies is a work consisting of 20 individual short films. Between 2006 and 2009, Zmijewski documented different public events. The short films cover from protests against Israeli occupying forces in the Gaza Strip, to the funeral service for Jörg Haider in Klagenfurt, riots involving nationalist football hooligans during the 2006 World Championship in Germany, the 1st May skirmishes in Berlin, to feminist demonstrations and the re-enactments of political events such as the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. Zmijewski comments on these films: *I chose the title "Democracies", because it is an inherent lie. Not all of those are democracies.* The aforementioned events attest to this, sometimes in a brutally pragmatic manner and, on other occasions, in a subtle and seemingly unconflictual way. Here, Zmijewski explores the idea of 'democracy' and demonstrates its absolute boundaries, as well as its inherent elasticity. The question of power, the distribution of power and the struggle for power are inevitable within this presentation.

Zmijewski's recordings in *Two Monuments* and *Democracies* do not generalize collective human behaviour. Instead they represent a multi-faceted and profound demonstration, as the individual voices of single protagonists re-emerge. These voices make a generalization of human behaviour impossible, and they mark Zmijewski's sensibility towards human susceptibility. In this sense, *Two Monuments* and *Democracies* are a kind of social and political research.

Two Monuments takes the form of a social experiment, carried out by the artist in order to reveal unpredictable results of human behaviour. In previous works, such as *Repetition* (2005), *Them* (2007) or *Swiecie* (2009), the artist also functions as a sociological catalyst of social moments.

Artur Zmijewski (1966, born in Warsaw) represented the Polish Pavillion in 2005 at the 51st Biennale in Venice. In 2007 he participated at "documenta12" in Kassel as well as at the second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art in Moscow. The MOMA New York is currently exhibiting Zmijewski's solo exhibition "Project 91: Artur Zmijewski" with a new film (29th Oct. until 1st Feb.) and the Camera Austria will be presenting "Democracies" as part of the *steirischer Herbst* festival until January 2010, along with other selected works.

Artist Talk. On Friday, 11th December, at 6.30 p.m., an artist talk will take place between Artur Zmijewski and Adam Szymczyk, director of Kunsthalle Basel, (in English). In 2005, Adam Szymczyk curated Zmijewski's solo exhibition in the Kunsthalle Basel, which was running at the same time as his exhibition at the Venice Biennale. Zmijewski's monographic catalogue "If it hapened olny once it's as if it never happened" available through the gallery, was published within this context.

For press photos or further information, please contact Lilia Stankiewicz (lilia@peterkilchmann.com).