



Zurich, September 20, 2006

## Press Release

### LOIS HECHENBLAIKNER SCHNEEPUBLIKUM

October 7 – November 12, 2006

Opening October 6, 2006 7pm

#### Jörg Bader,

Centre de la Photographie, Geneva,  
will speak at the opening reception.

WIDMER+THEODORIDIS contemporary are delighted to present the first Swiss solo exhibition by the Austrian photographer Lois Hechenblaikner. On display will be a selection of his works from the series 'Schneepublikum' (snow audience).

Lois Hechenblaikner is considered as a critical observer of the changes in the Alpine area. Born and raised in the Alpbachtal (Tirol) he was early on confronted with tourism and the tourism industry in Tirol. As a young man he travelled from 1981 for many years as a photographer to many different countries, mainly in Southeast Asia.

After his return to the Alpbachtal his artistic approach changed. The idealised, romantic landscape, wild and pristine, as in Anselm Adams powerful photographs didn't exist anymore. Photographers like the American Walker Evans had introduced pictures in documentary style, Robert Adams and Lewis Baltz had picked up in their work civilisations encroachment and the change from the natural landscape to the cultural landscape. It was impossible for subsequent artists to fade out this conscious awareness. In this spirit Hechenblaikner gazes at the new Tirolian cultural landscape, questions and requests to reference the cultural, ecological and political relations.

Gegenüberstellungen

In 2000 Hechenblaikner came across the photo archive of the agricultural engineer Armin Kniely. This encounter marks the beginning of a continuous artistic dialog. Kniely had captured between 1938 and 1969 on behalf of the Tirolian Agricultural Office as a freelance photojournalist the cultural landscape of Tirol. His work was to record and to document in an objective and authentic way the complexity of rural Tirol. The in-depth and substantial extent of this work could enable a later typology. This 'Becher' approach in Kniely's work was detected by Hechenblaikner and extended by referencing time and space. In 'Gegenüberstellungen' (confrontations) he complements the existing pictures with current, formal identical phenomena: a natural forest looking like a forest of ski sticks, a peasant girl heavily laden with hay opposite a starting hang-glider.

Schneepublikum

This critical perception on the occupation and conquest of the Alpine landscape by the urban leisure society is adapted by Hechenblaikner also in 'Schneepublikum'. He draws the spectator in a determined and documentary way into his mountains where he exposes him to the power of his aesthetic pure pictures. The story that belongs to it and which is behind it is only explored at a second glance, but can then, as in a picture puzzle, not be blinded out anymore. Mass tourism suddenly appears controversial and disturbing which is the goal and the origin of Hechenblaikner's work.

The Kunsthhaus Zurich will exhibit 'Gegenüberstellungen' for the first time in Switzerland in October 2006. A catalogue with the complete series of 'Gegenüberstellungen' is available, introduction written by Thomas Weski, Haus der Kunst Munich. More works from Lois Hechenblaikner are available on request at WIDMER+THEODORIDIS contemporary.

<http://www.hechenblaikner.at>

Lois Hechenblaikner (\*1958) lives and works in Reith/Tirol. He has received several awards.

#### KunstKüche

Saturday, October 28, 2006 8pm

Jann M. Hoffmann and Stefan Iseli, Zentraleck Zurich (<http://www.zentraleck.ch>), create stunning titbits to the works of Lois Hechenblaikner.

3-course dinner, incl. apero and all drinks: CHF 75.

Limited availability, reservation requested: [mail@0010.ch](mailto:mail@0010.ch) or +41 43 497 3970