

Zurich August 15, 2009

Press Release

LOIS HECHENBLAIKNER THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRIA

August 29 - October 17, 2009

Opening reception

Friday August 28, 2009 6pm

WIDMER+THEODORIDIS contemporary is pleased to present the Austrian artist Lois Hechenblaikner for the second time in Zurich. On display are new works from the series 'The Spirit of Austria'. The exhibition will be accompanied by a selection of diptychs from the newly published catalogue 'Hinter den Bergen'.

Hechenblaikner's accurate photography is based upon his curious glance at people and the space that lies between them. He fixes the traces of human civilisation by evoking repulsion and affection and presents pictures that call for more.

His chosen test objects are the Alps. In distinct and aesthetic pure pictures Lois Hechenblaikner shows a world with deep scars made by our leisure society.

His inspiration for 'The Spirit of Austria' comes from the Austrian commercial for tourism and its ambiguous slogan. So he decided to step into the cellars of the alpine gastronomy. What we get to see are gadgets with clearly labeled panels and dainty routed colourful tubes that remind us of intensive care units. Sometimes one may rather think of a data processing center if there weren't the labels 'beer', 'Glühwein' and 'Jaga-tea'.

The Alps that are serving as a projection for an intact nature can't withhold the run of the urban mass tourism - nor can the alpine population that depend on it. And suddenly they make sense, these restaurant halls that are devoid of people. They are themselves exploited rooms, gadgets, filling stations, just like the ones in the cellars, serving to increase profitability and efficiency.

Hechenblaikner puts his fingers on crosspoints of our national identity. The loss of an unhurt country is especially in the series 'Hinter den Bergen' evident. In numerous diptychs he records the 'Before' and the 'After'.

www.hechenblaikner.at

Lois Hechenblaikner lives and works in Reidt/Tyrol and has received several awards. His work is included in the UBS collection and has been shown at the Austrian Cultural Institute, New York and this year at the Wolfsberg/Ermatingen CH.