

Zurich April 28, 2009

Press Release

FRANZ WASSERMANN
EXISTENZ

May 8 - June 27, 2009

Opening reception

Thursday May 7, 2009 7pm

Flags

WIDMER+THEODORIDIS contemporary is pleased to present in Zurich the Austrian artist Franz Wassermann. On display is the room installation 'Existenz – Die Freiheit'.

200 crosses in the gallery main room along with flags on the outside of the gallery will outline the subject of the existential freedom of the individual. Wassermann specifically applies religious and political insignias of power that trigger spontaneous emotional associations in the collective awareness.

The Old High German term 'gundfano' (battle cloth) describes an embroidered or imprinted cloth that was mounted on a pole. It's a derivative of the Roman insignia that originally was made of wood and metal to hold the symbols of battle and sovereignty.

Cross

Derived from the Latin word 'cruis' (wood of torture). The cross made of two even bars was already known during the young Stone Age. It's assumed to have been a symbol for the point of the compass and the sun. Since the times of the emperor Constantine the Great the cross has been the most commonly designed object in Christian art. It serves as a commitment to the Christian believes and is a symbol for the resurrection.

The provokingly irritating principles on the flags and the crosses substantiate the myths of battle and sacrifice in our society: 'Mein Körper gehört nicht mir' (My Body doesn't belong to me), 'Mein Körper ist eine Waffe' (My Body is a Weapon), 'Mein Körper ist das Schlachtfeld' (My Body is the Battle Field). Whereas the Greek, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew principles refer to the great monotheistic religions of the world, the English maxims relate to the global position of power of economics and science.

Wassermann thus visualizes power and powerlessness and the exploitation of image and word with very simple means. The human being between the priorities of politics and religion is and has always been the object of power struggles. By public accumulation of their symbols like the cross, flag, portrait and word Wassermann forces the myth to the surface and makes it visible and arguable.

By distributing flyers in the whole city Wassermann emphasizes and references to the global mechanism of marketing and manipulation.

www.mylivingroom.org

Franz Wassermann became known in Austria with his project 'Barbie and Ken are HIV-positive'. His video 'I' has been presented internationally. For 'Schubhaft' (Arrest) he occupied the institutional 'Galerie im Taxispalais' in Innsbruck and for his 'Ikonen' (Icons) he drowns and seals famous art pieces, as of Josef Beuys in water. His newest projects 'Temporäres Denkmal' and 'Narben' have been attentively discussed in Austria.

www.hot-art-fair.com

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