

HELMHAUS ZÜRICH

5. February – 5. April 2010

IAN ANÜLL RIEN NE VA PLUS

Ian Anüll (*1948) is a well-travelled artist who responds with a light heart and a focused mind to physical and spiritual found pieces. With his inimitable take on reinterpreting, twisting and shifting meanings, he undermines the entrenched values of society. For his exhibition at the Helmhaus Zürich, he has assembled and revamped 25 years of videos, photographs, installations, objects, collages, paintings and record albums. Old and new works will be on view as well as works never exhibited in public before.

Having converted the lobby on the first floor into a record shop, **Ultimate Records**, Ian Anüll confronts the public with an aspect of his work that is as personal as it is passionate. In his shop-cum-installation, Anüll presents himself as music producer, designer of autonomous record covers and a fervent collector of record albums.

The first gallery presents **Made in China**, a series of authentic Chinese origins. Behind the transparent room divider, picturing the gigantic lettering CHANEL with Chinese soldiers at roll call underneath, we find ourselves in the land of copyists and product pirates. The large-format portrait of Mao, taken from banknotes, embodies today's capitalist China. It is playfully embroidered by Anüll's video: in exchange for chocolate made in Switzerland, some 70 people on the streets of Beijing wrote the words "Made in China" on a piece of Chinese canvas, thereby producing a series of pictures that is nothing but a definition of its own origin.

The large gallery, divided into three sections, shows works on **money** and **copies** as well as examples from the series **1000 M**. All three issues have long been the subject of Anüll's intense artistic scrutiny. The earliest work in the exhibition (1983/1984) consists of 12 truncated columns that look like marble. Titled *Change*, it stands for the end of its own monetary existence and the reversal of capital gains. Two Arne Jacobsen chairs placed beneath the room divider are more than just design classics; they were once actually in use at the Schweizerische Nationalbank and their status as cult objects is underscored by repairing a bit of missing veneer with real gold. The central portion of the room shows Anüll's play on the meaning of Cyrillic lettering and the transfer of found colours to new pictures: every copy is an original and conversely. This area also juxtaposes works from the **Chocolate** (2008/2009) series with the artist's most recent project, **Take me to the Moon**, a piece of children's furniture enlarged 10 times. An interesting reciprocity is involved in the *1000 M* series. What does a single sign stand for? How universal is a possible meaning? To what extent can a sign be transformed without losing its meaning? The photograph reproduced on the room divider provides possible answers:

In Ilya Kabakov's replica of a public toilet for *documenta IX* in 1992, the M stands for that half of the latrine reserved for the male sex. But the M's in Anüll's newspaper works and in his overpainted newspaper pictures have a different meaning. And in Switzerland M obviously stands for the Migros supermarket. It does not stand for McDonald's and it does not stand for

the French Metro. Depending on its design, it stands for labels that mean nothing to us in Switzerland.

Another group of related works, on display in the smaller gallery, is collectively titled **Zeitbilder (Images of Time)**, in which the passage of time is visualized through subtle interventions or slight displacements that draw attention to time gaps sometimes spanning up to several decades. Exactly 50 years lie between a found oil painting of an apple tree near Weinstegen and another image next to it of an entirely different order. And in *Deutschland 07*, we see the six possible combinations of black, red and gold as a collection of flags on newsprint, which prove, on closer study, to be papers from Berlin, covering a period of two decades that radically changed the face of the city.

In the upper story, two rooms are filled with works on the subject of *Obdachlosigkeit/Homelessness*. These tie in with earlier works and pursue questions that Anüll has been investigating since the late 1980s. The video **Gran Via** (2006), filmed in the streets of Madrid, shows a man carefully taking old cardboard boxes apart and piling some of the pieces up with such meticulous care that he could be making a bed for himself. Different forms of street life are seen in another video series, **Grande Rue** (2009). Projected onto truly featherweight comforters, they provoke associations with a shelter. Anüll's interest in shelters is a direct consequence of his artistic study of homelessness and they appear throughout his oeuvre in a variety of forms.

The tour of the exhibition concludes in the last gallery with a display of items from Anüll's collection of artists' record albums. His work **World Music** can be seen and heard here as well: in LP format, it offers startling acoustic surprises behind untreated cotton: a potpourri of sounds from punk to classical, mixed with the sounds of daily life.

The accompanying, richly illustrated publication *Ian Anüll: Rien ne va plus* contains essays by Huang Qi, Nils Röller, Rolf Winnewisser and Andreas Vogel. The book is designed by Georg Rutishauser and distributed by edition fink, Verlag für zeitgenössische Kunst, Zürich.

Two evening performances will be presented as part of the Helmhaus Zürich concert series. Musicians Luigi Archetti (e-guitar, electronics) and Bo Wiget (cello, electronics) meet up with Joachim Irmeler – ex Faust (organ) for an experimental electro-acoustic concert. The second concert with the legendary EMBRYO (D) Band & Guests will take place in the Wasserkirche. On the same evening, music from Ian Anüll's extensive record collection will be played in the exhibition, selected by the artist himself and Sven Schneider, DJ from Berlin (Klub der Republik).

In addition to our authoritative guided tours, we now offer a special for children (aged 4 to 10) accompanied by an adult, who can devise their own individual tours of the exhibition on the basis of a specially designed manual.