

# PRESS RELEASE

## Jānis Avotiņš Jan Stieding Cornelius Quabeck

13th November 2004 until 15th January 2005  
Opening: Friday, 12th November, 7.00 p.m.

This forthcoming group exhibition at the Rüdiger Schöttle Gallery will be presenting three artists who work in completely different ways in terms of both form and content. The paintings of the Latvian artist Jānis Avotiņš entice the viewer into a mysterious, Kafkaesque world of images which tell of a direct yet alienating confrontation of the human being with his environment. Personal, biographical motifs form the basis of Jan Stieding's painterly retrospective view: what used to be familiar is now recontemplated from the distance of time. Cornelius Quabeck's charcoal drawings of hybrid creatures are a subtly psychological exploration of the relationship between humans and animals.

The main theme of the young Latvian painter **Jānis Avotiņš** (born 1981) is as explicit as it is essential: the fundamental solitude of human existence. The figures in his paintings are alone, thrown back on themselves, for the most part extremely tiny in a huge spatial context. His paintings are contemporary depictions of human life – depictions that have something fortuitous about them and yet at the same time seem to have providence as their theme. The ambiguity and vulnerability of modern life are underscored by the blurred contours and the soft and gentle colouration of his paintings.

**Jan Stieding** (born 1966) was a post-graduate student (*Meisterschüler*) of Jörg Immendorff at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. Having grown up in the GDR, Stieding transports many references and memories from his East German past into the Federal German present. The painter's process of retrospection is always tinged with irony. As though captured with a snapshot camera, his figures seem to detach themselves from backgrounds that no longer constitute reality as we know it today: a luxury bar à la GDR, a festively decorated hall in a "House of Culture" or a frozen lake. Stieding's specifically painterly treatment heightens this impression: no matter whether it is the girl skating or, as in *Subotnik*, the young women doing unpaid voluntary work on a farm – they are all figures that people the scene in collage-like fashion and are thus clearly divorced from the picture space that surrounds them.

Testifying to a completely different world of images are **Cornelius Quabeck's** (born 1974) charcoal drawings which he executes on cotton fabric and mounts on canvas stretchers. With a virtuoso technique using thousands of individual strokes of the

charcoal crayon, Quabeck creates a vast diversity of portraits and scenic depictions of human beings, animals and hybrid creatures. What is thematically central to Quabeck's work are not only the evolutionary affinities between humans and animals but also the psychological characteristics which they have in common. Such affinities become evident, for example, when we consider his two latest works featuring the wind-blown hair of a woman and the wind-blown mane of a horse, the latter clearly adopting the posture and characteristics of the former. Totally different associations between humans and animals operate in *The Power of Negation*, a drawing depicting a gorilla approaching a city in a destructive, King Kong-like frenzy and, at the other end of the scale, in *The Leap into Happiness and Back*, a two-part fairytale about a dog that leaps weightlessly into a bright galaxy and evokes a dreamlike state of cosmic unity.

This forthcoming exhibition is the latest in our new series of group exhibitions of young contemporary painters.

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