

L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

Wilson Shieh and Michael Ziegler

March 7 to May 3, 2008

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Friday, March 7, from 7 p.m.

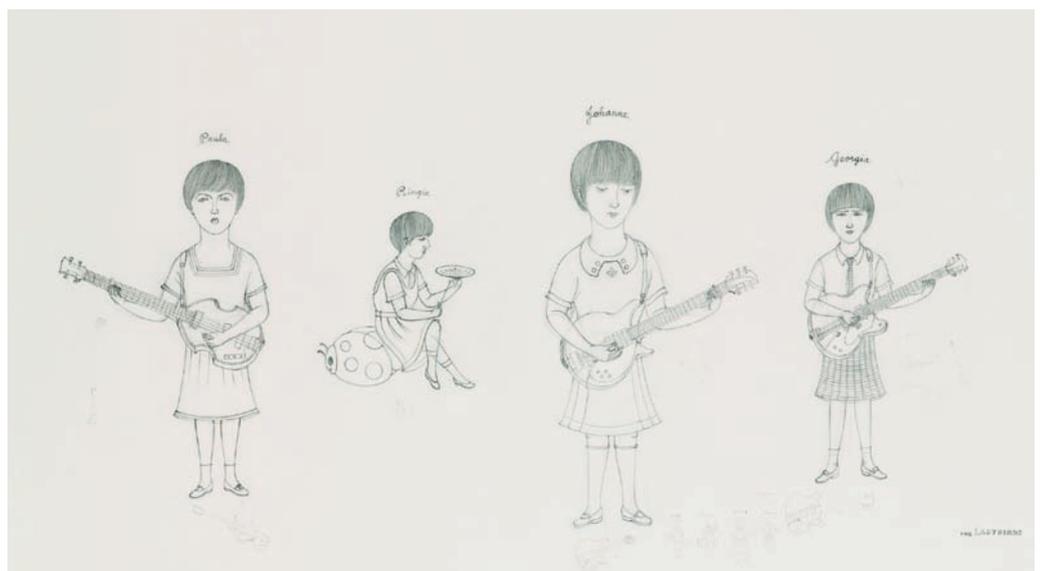
The artists will be present.

In March and April 2008, L.A. Gallery is showing the works of Hong Kong artist Wilson Shieh (b. 1970) and Austrian artist Michael Ziegler (b. 1960). Shieh graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong with a Master of Fine Arts in 2001 and has been quite successful as an artist in the former colonial city. Michael Ziegler studied painting at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg with Professor Peter Prandstetter. He lives and works in Innsbruck/Austria.

This exhibition juxtaposes two artists of totally different cultural backgrounds. In terms of technique, too, they approach their subjects in entirely different ways. And yet, this encounter between East and West promises to be enlightening for a number of reasons.

Wilson Shieh studied the traditional Gongbi (fine-line) painting technique, in which he has acquired a masterly level close to that of the great artists of the Song and Tang periods. He says that he aims at filling the classical Chinese aesthetics of his traditionally rather small-format pictures with modern or contemporary subjects and contents. Concentrating on figurative painting, he leaves out certain classical

motifs (such as animals) or replaces them with modern ones, especially architecture, and often buildings that are characteristic of Hong Kong; and in doing so, he comments on the city's social and political affairs. When, for example, he has a man with a naked backside taking a shower in a skyscraper building-turned-shower cabin complete with company logo, and calls such a picture – which is still done in classical style – “King-Sized Closet”, he achieves two things: On the one hand, such a picture can be read as a call directed at a certain industrialist to do more for his city – after all, things have not been rosy for artists, and people in Hong Kong in general, since its handover to China. Yet it also quietly but clearly causes provocation in a society that is definitely still Victorian prudish.



Wilson Shieh "The Ladybirds", 2007, Drawing, 73 x 128 cm



Wilson Shieh "Swimmer 4", 2007, Drawing, 84 x 86,5 cm

Peter Weiermair on **Michael Ziegler**:

"If one wished to have pictures to illustrate the Austrian writer Robert Musil's famed adolescence novel *The Confusions of Young Törless*, no one would be more apt to draw them than Michael Ziegler, this reclusive artist living and working in

Innsbruck. His fine pencil drawings, concentrated on the line and sometimes covering the sheet like a spider's web, take their iconographic inventory from the artist's subconscious, where pornographic photographs mingle with the drawings and paintings of old masters, where film stills merge with



Wilson Shieh "Lady", 2007, Drawing, 68 x 51 cm



Wilson Shieh "Mother", 2007, Drawing, 70 x 48 cm



Michael Ziegler "o.T.", 2004-2007, Drawing, 32 x 24 cm



Michael Ziegler "o.T.", 2004-2007, Drawing, 32 x 24 cm

images evoked by literary texts and continue to have mysterious effects which at times even their creator cannot explain. Michael Ziegler, this heir of Otto Meyer-Amden and Pierre Klossowski, is at home with Pontormo's drawings just as much as with the artists of the Italian Renaissance, like Signorelli, but also with Japanese film classics. His narrative drawings, often erotic and sexual rituals full of allusions, are left to the individual viewer's interpretation.

In changing constellations, Ziegler brings together artistic worlds, linear puppet theaters and figures. It is an intimate would-be world, a web of dreams whose flimsy threads are meant to be detangled, and through which the contours of the bare protagonist on the white sheet can often just be deciphered."

Coming back to the reason for this double exhibition, we can now see several aspects where the two artists touch common ground, such as the concentration on the figurative and the instrumentalization of sexual stimuli. The intentional misplacing of figures and body parts could be added to the list. When Wilson Shieh places a man in a skyscraper-shower cabin or puts clothes on him that bear a remarkable resemblance to well-known buildings in Hong Kong, he achieves an entirely different effect from Michael Ziegler drawing a figure with one arm disturbingly bent in impossible angles – the procedure, however, is the same. In both cases, the human figure is a vehicle for something else, commenting on something or stimulating the imagination, but never as an independent being.



Michael Ziegler "o.T.", 2004-2007, Drawing, 32 x 24 cm



Michael Ziegler "o.T.", 2004-2007, Drawing, 24 x 32 cm

The faces of both artists' figures are bare of any characteristics. They are exchangeable for different reasons, although it is up to the viewer to decide whether this is intended to serve identification or, on the contrary, non-identification.

After all, the pivotal concordance between the two are their conflicting personalities as artists: Michael Ziegler is supposed to have said that he stays away from using color in his pictures because as soon you lay hands on color, you situate yourself within the framework and the history of painting.

From this art historical-general reasoning he draws the legitimization for his drawings with their remarkably intimate and private subjects. Shieh directly and affirmatively draws on the classic painting technique, but in terms of his subject matter he is turned towards the public and to the present, albeit in a quietly subversive way. To be sure, neither artist is drawn to sentimentality.

Texts by Peter Weiermair and Bato Prosic



Michael Ziegler "o.T."; 2004-2007, Drawing, 24 x 32 cm

PREVIEW

L.A. Galerie, Frankfurt:

Liu Ding, "Plato's Scalp", May 9 – July 5, 2008

Exhibitions:

Zhao Liang, 5th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art,
Berlin, Germany April 5 – June 15, 2008

Liu Ding: "Contemporary Art from China",
Groninger Museum, The Netherlands,
March 23 – October 26, 2008

Tracey Moffatt: "All inclusive – die Welt des Tourismus",
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany,
January 30 – May 4, 2008

Julian Faulhaber: Kunstverein Recklinghausen,
Germany, April May, 2008

Art Fairs:

Art Cologne, April 16 – April 20, 2008

Art Melbourne, July 30 – August 3, 2008

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