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Press release:

Walter Dahn, Solaris. Photographs 1973-2010.
Opening on July 16, 2010 at 7.00 p.m. in the presence of the artist.
Exhibition runs from July 17 through August 28, 2010.

On July 16, 2010, we inaugurate at 7.00 p.m. the exhibition *Walter Dahn, Solaris. Photographie 1973-2010*. The 18 photoworks, that have found their way from the artist's "archive" to the situation of being an exhibited artwork, have been shot between 1973 and 2010. All the works have been printed recently and for the exhibition on bamboo-paper in a pigment ink print-process, each in a different format.

While Dahn's paintings and drawings have been shown regularly, exhibitions dedicated to photography have been shown rarely (latest in 2003 in the Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann, Zürich, before that also in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn in 1984). However, Dahn considers all media always equally valid. The photographs are for him attempts to keep open the possibilities of a true freedom by seemingly making "everything wrong" in the first step and by making visible a quality in the second step. But no quality that can be – in a modernist way, like Clement Greenberg tried to do – assigned to a specific artistic media, but a quality that goes beyond the borders of media, dissolving them in this process. Thus, Dahn is – being a true student of his former teacher Joseph Beuys and his "erweiterter Kunstbegriff" ("expanded concept of art") – transgressing the narrow corset of the media. And he is not longing for technical perfection – different from that what we know from the German, contemporary photography of the Dusseldorf "Becher-school" –, but leaves the images as a, as he calls it, "construction site". Still, he is committed to a very subjective idea of quality, as one can see in his works, a quality that is not obvious, but that can be perceived by scrutinizing and analyzing. Dahn is trying to show us freedom and to hit the mark, and *Solaris* permits us to accompany him on this sensible journey.

His first art-photography, *Filmanfang (Tisch)/Beginning of the Film (Table)*, seems to be very private, it shows a table in his kitchen. At the same time, a "mistake", the beginning of a filmrole, serves as a starting point, as the initiation of his personal film to take photos. Finally, this work is on a formal level extremely precise, the piece comes to live through the choice of exactly this image of the kitchen table and the mistake: a harmonic, mondrianesque constellation in a large diversity of greys. Also the next work in our exhibition, *Kein Vulkan (Werk und Wolke)/No Volcano (Work and Cloud)* is only seemingly a snapshot from Ticino, shot during a vacation with his family. "Seemingly" a snapshot, because the found situation of earlier years has been connected with subtle irony in act of choice and naming to A.R. Penck's magazine *Krater und Wolke/Crater and Cloud*. Such references to the art history or the history of mankind can be found frequently (e.g. *Der Blossfeld/The Blossfeld*, *Haus/House,* or *Kleiner Helfer/Little Helper*). They can be – together with the irony – considered as a recurrent element of Dahn's photographs. And other works, as for instance the central piece *L'enfant sauvage*, can be read as self-portraits: the *BTR-T-Shirt* with Bruce Springsteen's lyrics "Tramps like us, Baby, we were born to run", or *Iguana Rock'n Roll*, or *Unterwegs/On the Road*.

"Solaris" was a 35-mm-film-brand in the former GDR. Dahn considered its minor quality as useful for his own works. However, *Solaris* is also the name of the planet that gave Stanislaw Lem's famous novel and Andrei Tarkowski's film adaption their title. And their, on the planet, particular physical laws are effective. Such laws cannot be created by Dahn, but he creates with his unexpected images that are full of associations and formally distinctive his own planet of photography. This planet is lightyears away of what we usually know as photography.

For more information and / or images please contact the gallery.
Special thanks to Sprüth Magers.

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