

L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

# John Hilliard

## “Profiles”

January 23rd to March 14th, 2009

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Friday,  
January 23rd, from 7 p.m.

The artist will be present.

### Profiles

In examining the consequences of adopting one point-of-view rather than another when recording a symmetrical object, and at the same time exploring the camera's capacity for making multiple exposures onto a single piece of film, I have made numerous works that combine either three or (more usually) four perspectives as a unified composite – allowing a simultaneity of otherwise separate depictions, and resulting in the complex image originating from this interface (eg *Division Of Labour*, 2004; *1,2,3*, 2004; *Inside Out*, 2005). A desire to escape the somewhat tedious and pedestrian method of producing these triple and quadruple exposures (all painstakingly measured and lit to ensure a constancy of distance and illumination), coupled with an interest in addressing some asymmetrical subjects, has led to a procedural and representational reduction. In restricting

the variable point-of-view to its lowest number (two) for the purpose of comparing-and-contrasting, a recent body of work is confined to only a double exposure, and the subjects are chosen because, from two opposing sides, they maintain a particular (if laterally inverted) profile.

The term 'profile' is being used here not only literally with regard to shape, but also figuratively: we speak of a medical profile, a police profile, a psychological profile, a public profile, and so on. In *Good Dog/Bad Dog* (2006) a traditional child's toy, a spotted pull-along dog on wheels, is standing on the matted floor of a room. Seen from one side, he is in front of an illuminated Christmas tree, surrounded by brightly gift-wrapped packages, presumably containing presents, of which the aptly named 'Spotty' may himself, in fact, be one. Seen from the other side, a woman, reclining in front of a blue, folding screen, completely nude except for a black mask, gazes intimately towards him with a knowing smile. In the composite of both views (one flipped horizontally and then placed congruently over the other), the pattern of the William Morris wallpaper behind the Christmas tree now imprints itself onto the woman's flesh as an extensive floral 'tattoo', only adding to her risqué appeal for the 'bad dog'.

The digital technique for superimposing two opposing views of an asymmetrical subject (as opposed to the more traditional double exposure suitable for a bisymmetrical shape) is similarly applied to two other works, each featuring a seated female figure seen side-on in profile. In *Another Time, Another Place* (2005), a neatly attired woman in black dress and shoes sits with an open book on her lap. From one direction, she appears in front of adjacent walls decorated with a large photo-mural of a tropical island at sunset; from the other, she is in proximity to a display of black-and-white photographs of Nineteenth-Century nudes, exhibited on a grey background. The sober neutrality of the woman is in contrast with both the collection of erotica and the



“In Black-And-White And Colour”, 2007, c-type photo on aluminium, 126 x 145 cm





"Labour, Intellect And Celebrity", 2007, c-type photo on aluminium, 125 x 156 cm

exotic location depicted in the mural, now mixed into a potent brew – and who knows what she's reading? The title of the work (*Another Time, Another Place*), which suggests her distracted attention is not in the here and now, may also be understood as a definition of photography itself, where the pictures we see will always have been made previously, and almost certainly in a different location to the one in which they are viewed. *Naked/Nude* (2006) similarly shows a seated woman, this time unclothed except for her shoes, posed in a studio environment, and the object of attention for two distinct groups. On one side of the room are

art students at their easels, drawing or painting from observation. On the other, equipped with cameras and tripods, are photographers, capturing her image on film. With the two opposing views superimposed, the shared model is restored as a single entity, surrounded by her observers in a crowded, disputatious overlay. Is the centre of their joint interest rendered naked or nude? Is she the object of the photographer's voyeuristic lens, or the subject of the artist's sympathetic pencil – or is it the other way round? The shoes, glamorous accessory or protective footwear, may be the pivot on which she balances between these two perceptions.



"Preferred Reading", 2008, c-type photo on aluminium, 126 x 153 cm

If the artists in *Naked/Nude* are executing a graphic outline, in all these pieces where a figure is targeted as the central subject there is also the implication (albeit fictive) of a biographical one, usually predicated on a simple opposition (good/bad; yes/no; etc). But perhaps more importantly the double profile, considered as a repeated cut-out, one version laid roughly on top of the other to establish a more emphatic presence, is in every sense at the centre of this work – an out-of-sync duet which nevertheless asserts itself as the most stable constant in uncertain surroundings.



"Construction", 2008, c-type photo on aluminium, 126 x 156 cm

In a third piece featuring a figure in a chair, *Labour, Intellect And Celebrity* (2007), a woman sits in her studio, attired not for manual work, but dressed up, ready to go out. Behind her, from one direction, we see the tools, materials and products of the artist. Looking at her from the opposite side we are now aware of her bookshelves, desk, computer and writing paraphernalia. She does preparatory research, she gets her hands dirty on the shop floor, and she goes out to socialise. She is a thinker, manual labourer and partygoer – a contemporary artist 'in profile'.

and its surrounds are rendered in full colour, now revealing evidence of the present day, with the inclusion of a brightly dressed young woman. The overlay of both views yields a muted palette where black-and-white dilutes the colour. The 'meeting point' then is of monochrome and colour, past and present, facilitated by that other meeting point of two frames of film, registering opposing views towards a unique arboreal profile.

John Hilliard, October 2006  
(edited and revised November 2008)

In some respects, it is her literal profile, her outline seen from both sides, strengthened through doubling, the surrounding material from two reverse views now interfaced as composite information, that is at the core of this idea, and the artist in the studio is just one of many possible subjects co-opted to articulate it. Indeed, all the technical methods used to produce the pieces I have described have been applied to a diversity of material, ranging from domestic narratives to rugged landscapes. In the more rural surrounds of woodland, *Meeting Point* (2008) centres on a tree with a distinctive configuration. From one position there are no visible indications of the present (houses, cars, and so on), so that the view might be thought of as 'timeless'. Within photography's time, however, any backward trajectory terminates in the Nineteenth-Century, and accordingly we see a couple attired in costume of the period, depicted appropriately in black-and-white. From a reverse position the tree



"Division Of Labour", 2004, c-type photo on aluminium, 125 x 125 cm



"Four Faces Of Green", 2003, c-type photo on aluminium, 128 x 127 cm



"1,2,3", 2004, Iris print on museum board, 90 x 120 cm



"Transfixed", 2008, c-type photo on aluminium, 137 x 127 cm



"Meeting Point", 2008, c-type photo on aluminium, 127 x 136 cm

**John Hilliard lives and works in London, UK. He is professor at the Slade College in London. His works are presented in important collection like the Tade Gallery. His works were shown in many exhibitions like the Documenta in Kassel.**

## PREVIEW

### Art fairs:

- ARCO: February 11-16, 2009
- Art Cologne: April 22-26, 2009

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