

EINZELAUSSTELLUNG BEI BERLIN ART PROJECTS

ISMAIL NECMI: STILLS FROM UNMADE FILMS

14. – 28. FEBRUAR 2011

ERÖFFNUNG | 12. FEBRUAR 2011 | 16 – 21 UHR | SHOWROOM | UNTER DEN LINDEN 40 | 10117 BERLIN

Berlin Art Projects freut sich sehr, Sie zur Eröffnung der Einzelausstellung von Ismail Necmi am Samstag, 12. Februar, 16 – 21 Uhr einzuladen. Parallel zur Berlinale präsentiert die Galerie unter dem Titel "Stills from Unmade Films" die erste Einzelausstellung mit Fotoarbeiten des türkischen Künstlers in Deutschland.

International bekannt und erfolgreich als Filmemacher, ist Ismail Necmi seit den 1990er Jahren zugleich eine wichtige und prägende Größe in der türkischen Fotografie. Seine ungewöhnlichen und häufig surreal anmutenden Bilder überschreiten die Grenzen der herkömmlichen Genres wie Porträt, Landschaft und Stillleben und bewegen sich zwischen Traum, Fantasie und Kunstfertigkeit. Über einen längeren Zeitraum hat sich der Künstler mit den Sehnsüchten seiner Mitmenschen auseinandergesetzt. In seinen Settings bot er Istanbulern unterschiedlicher sozialer Schichten einen ästhetischen Raum, gab ihnen die visuelle Möglichkeit, häufig unausgesprochen gebliebene Wünsche und Hoffnungen preiszugeben, in Rollen zu schlüpfen und ihr verborgenes Innerstes zu offenbaren. Die Grenzen zwischen wirklichem Leben und Kunst und Fantasie sind fließend in Necmis Arbeiten. Ausgehend von der langen Tradition des türkischen Fotojournalismus nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, zeigen sie eine enge Kontinuität zwischen diesem und einer daraus entstandenen neuen Sichtweise in der Fotografie, die auf Bildtraditionen Europas und des Mittleren Ostens zurückgreift und die sich bemüht, die vielschichtigen und komplexen Dimensionen des Alltäglichen und „Realen“ in der Türkei einzufangen und wiederzugeben.

Das Konzept der Ausstellung „Stills from Unmade Films“ beruht auf der Wechselwirkung zwischen den schwarz-weiß Fotografien und Betrachtungen über dieselben. Die Bilder wirken oft wie eingefrorene Momente aus unbekanntem, ungesehenen Filmen; wie Szenen ohne jede Bewegung. Kommentiert vom in Istanbul lebenden britisch-australischen Autor Samuel Williams, erscheint Necmis fotografisches Werk als eine Ansammlung unbeweglicher Sequenzen aus Spielfilmen, die er nie hat drehen können. Williams hat für jedes Bild ein Fragment eines Drehbuchs entworfen, ein filmisches „Was wäre wenn“, das das Verschmelzen von Fakt und Fiktion unterstreicht und fortführt.

ISMAIL NECMI | * 1971 in Istanbul | unabhängiger Fotograf und Filmemacher | Studium der Rechtswissenschaften | Mitwirkung an zahlreichen Dokumentationen, Spiel- und Kurzfilmen | Fotografische Projekte: „Transformationen“ 2001 | „The image is you!“ 2002 | Filmdebüt 2009 „Should I really do it“ – produziert selbst, schreibt, dreht und führt Regie | Gezeigt auf Filmfestivals u.a.: 24. Toronto International Film Festival 2009 (offizielle Auswahl), Montreal, Sao Paulo, Kairo, Göteborg, Thessaloniki, Istanbul MODERN – Museum of Modern Art | Auszeichnungen: Daniel Langlois Innovation Award; 38. Montreal International Festival du Nouveau Cinema 2009, Internat. Wettbewerb | Most Promising New Director Award/ Most Promising New Screenwriter Award. 20. Ankara International Film Festival 2009, Nationaler Wettbewerb | Audience Choice Award. 1. Rome Gender DocuFilm Festival 2010, Internat. Wettbewerb | unterrichtet als Dozent an verschiedenen türkischen Universitäten.

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SOLO EXHIBITION AT BERLIN ART PROJECTS

ISMAIL NECMI: STILLS FROM UNMADE FILMS

FEBRUARY 14 – 28, 2011

OPENING | FEBRUARY 12 | 4 – 9 PM | SHOWROOM | UNTER DEN LINDEN 40 | 10117 BERLIN

Berlin Art Projects are delighted to invite you to the opening of the solo exhibition by Ismail Necmi on Saturday, February 12, at 4 – 9 pm. The gallery is putting on this young Turkish artist's first solo exhibition in Germany, entitled "Stills from Unmade Films"

Although perhaps better known internationally as a filmmaker, Ismail Necmi has been one of the most influential and distinctive forces in underground Turkish photography since the 1990s. In a national tradition long dominated by photojournalistic realism, his edgy and often surreal work takes the most colloquial forms of still images and explores the layers of dream, fantasy and artifice that are really at play in the everyday in contemporary Turkey. Necmi has worked over prolonged periods of time with real individuals in Istanbul, offering people from diverse walks of life an aesthetic space in which they can visually express the aspirations and desires that animate their lives but which they can't easily articulate in words – whether to transform into the person they want to be, or to show inner-selves they normally hide from everyone, or to live out their ultimate sexual fantasy.

Moreover, given Necmi's distinctive obsession with the blurred margins between life, art and fantasy, this exhibition enables viewers to explore the deep continuities between the critically acclaimed photojournalism of post-WWII Turkey and the resistant underground photography that has developed in its wake, as it struggles to capture more complex dimensions of 'the real' in Turkey, drawing on the visual traditions both of Europe and the Middle East.

"The concept for the exhibition draws on a frequent observation by commentators on Necmi's work – his photographs seem so often like freeze frames from films they've never seen; it is as though he is shooting films without the images moving. A collaboration with Istanbul-based British-Australian writer Samuel Williams, known mostly for his work in literary non-fiction, *Stills from Unmade Films* imagines the frozen black and whites of Necmi's photographic oeuvre as moments from movies he was never able to make. For each image, Williams has crafted a fragment of a screenplay; a cinematic "what if", which navigates in words a parallel of the photo's own visual conflation of fact and fiction. An encounter between two artists on the banks of the Bosphorus, both from different national backgrounds, both working in different media, *Stills from Unmade Films* enables viewers to experience viscerally the pulse of creative life in Istanbul, chance encounters between strangers from different cultures and a constant beat of incipient possibility."

SAMUEL WILLIAMS

"The images of Ismail Necmi weave, through a game of transformation, desire and fantasy, a unique photographic tapestry, somewhere between sensation and hallucination. With obvious references to silent cinema and the evocative landscape photography of Ansel Adams, the oeuvre of this accomplished Turkish artist puts forth extreme and often surrealist aspects of certain subjects, capturing the truth of the heroes and eliciting their secrets. In his black and white frames lurk the

colors of intensity, sensuality, and eccentricity. His landscapes are breathtaking. His nudes awaken

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our instincts. The expressions on people's faces tell stories which were never captured on celluloid, yet that is precisely what they imply. The artist's duality, as a photographer and filmmaker, defines his work. He pays attention to detail, he explores the borders between the real and the imaginary, he directs with a single click – the moment the shutter closes – what existed before and what will come after.”

DIMITRI EIPIDES

ISMAIL NECMI | Born in Turkey, Ismail Necmi works as an independent filmmaker, photographer and visual artist. After graduating in Law from Istanbul University, he collaborated on a number of movies, shorts and documentaries. As an independent photographer, his most notable projects have been: Transformation (2001), a solo black and white photography exhibition in Istanbul, and The image is YOU!, a black and white interactive photography project launched in 2002. His début real-life feature film, Should I Really Do It?, which he produced, wrote, directed, shot and edited, was shown at the 34th Toronto IFF 2009 as an official selection in the Discovery program, and in many other international film festivals – including Montreal, Reykjavik, São Paulo, Haifa, Rome, Hamburg, Bangkok, Cairo, Costa Rica, Göteborg, Mumbai and Thessaloniki. The movie received the Daniel Langlois Innovation Award at the International Competition of the 38th Montreal International Festival du Nouveau Cinéma 2009; Most Promising New Director Award and Most Promising New Screenwriter Award at the 20th Ankara International Film Festival 2009; and Audience Choice Award at the International Competition of the inaugural Rome Gender DocuFilm Festival 2010. The movie was also shown at Istanbul Modern, Istanbul's Museum of Modern Art, as the opening movie of an interdisciplinary conference on fetishism. In addition to his creative work, Necmi has also taught at a number of universities, including the departments of Visual Communication Design and Photography at Istanbul Bilgi University. He is currently an instructor in the Department of Radio, Television and Cinema at Istanbul's Kadir Has University.

SAMUEL WILLIAMS | Born in Australia, Samuel Williams is an anthropologist, writer and translator. He completed a Bachelor of Science in Physiology and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at the University of Sydney, and moved to the Middle East in 2003. After a period of graduate study in Ottoman history at Istanbul's Bosphorus University, he has been a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at Princeton University since 2006, and is based now in Turkey. Although his early scholarship focused on late nineteenth century Ottoman visual culture, particularly Osman Hamdi Bey, his more recent work draws together techniques from academic ethnography, documentary and literary non-fiction to explore cultural life in Istanbul today, and has received a series of awards from the Commonwealth of Australia, the Republic of Turkey, and academic associations in North America. He writes professionally as a freelance cultural critic for several magazines in Europe and Australia, and has worked on English translations of the Turkish writers Sevim Burak, Ece Ayhan, Aziz Nesin, Birhan Keskin and Hakan Gunday. He is currently preparing for publication his first full-length book about contemporary social life in a number of nineteenth century alleyways in a suburb of Istanbul.

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