

Philippe Meste

Smith/Stewart

29 August through 17 Oktober

This project try to put in parallel a question of survey with the works of Philippe Meste, French artist and Smith /Stewart, British artists. Survey of confrontation and relationship with power and the ways of life for Philippe Meste and relationship in the couple Smith and Stewart.

These two forms of confrontation form an integral part of our existence. Sex, violence, survival, love, aggression, obsessions, relationships and communication - these are indeed the subjects that art has the obligation to "touch". The examination of certain attitudes generated by them will remain a highly sensitive undertaking as long as their implications for the system we live in rest obscure, as long as they are sidelined and put off, so that dealing with them at all requires a fair amount of courage. These attitudes may be perceived directly, but also take on a more discreet, though just as intense, violent or extreme appearance.

From Manet to Marcos & Meste direct Mutations.

"Certainly, **Philippe Meste's** contribution resides above all in the conquest of the reality principle and frontality which begins pictorially with the scandal of Manet (a painting that, for the first time, does only one thing: looks us in the face) and follows politically with the case of the Deputy-Commander Marcos (a discursive directness without deviation or ideological basis, as Manet had abolished the narrative alibi). the turning points begins in this face to face encounter; and this conquest of frontality certainly marks out one of the most important stakes today: to establish a direct relation with the real, without mediation, without a screen ¹⁾. It is at the forefront of this direct access that the coming mutations are committed; for, above all, they reveal the struggle for a shared recovery of the real and for the breaking down of screens of all kind. Thus, Meste's message is addressed to us, not merely on a personal level (that of a work to be appreciated without equivalence), but as an invitation to everyone for an art and a world without a mediator. Once more – of the real – only auto-determination is real; and of all that is outside of this, there is merely screen, decoration, diversion and dispossession. In his pacific revolt, Meste is perhaps alarming; and this remains reassuring for this very reason. Before us and with us, we have an artist who has finally – irreversibly, without any possible remission and for each one of us – finally abolished our most profound syndrome: security."

Frank Perrin, May 1997

¹⁾ Thierry More, «Comment la techno survit à la mort de l'art» (Blocnotes n° 9, Nouvelles motricités, 1996)

Smith/Stewart, British artists, use video as the medium for their arts. They participated in the Biennale d'art contemporain de Lyon in 1996 and a in group exhibition in the Kunsthalle Bern in 1997.

The Medium as Metaphor

"We're really exploring a male/female relationship. That's a main concern in our work; exploring what that means, what that relationship could be, incorporating degrees of obsessive, even aggressive, extremes and transgressions." "When they are asked why they use video for their works, they reply that this is because video is so immediate and allows them to see directly and control what they are doing. Elsewhere in the conversation the point out that they are investigating the possibility of live performances, and in fact do not view themselves as video artists. Yet video is not just a medium that is particularly handy or easy to use for exploring a male/female relationship. On the contrary, the acuity of Smith/Stewart's work may well derive from the fact that they in effect overlay the video connection of image and subject with the connection between a man and a woman: in these works, video functions as a metaphor for the male/female relationship..."

Ulrich Loock

During the show, *La Cuisine* will be open every Thursday eveing. Information and reservations : 026 323 23 51

Thursday 7 Oktober at 8 p.m. : Guided visit of the exhibition with Michel Ritter, director of FRI-ART

Coming exhibition : **Peter Land**, from 31 October through 19 December, opening Saturday 30 October.

