

Press information

Andreas Siekmann

Verhandlungen unter Zeitdruck
Aus: *Faustpfand, Treuhand und die unsichtbare Hand (2005-2008)*
Negotiations under time pressure
From: *Pawns, Trustees, and the Invisible Hand (2005-2008)*

May 2 – June 7, 2008
Opening: Friday May 2, 2008, 6–9 pm
Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11 am–6 pm
Gallery Weekend: May 3 and May 4, 10 am–7 pm

Galerie Barbara Weiss is delighted to announce the opening of its new spaces on the ground floor of Zimmerstraße 88-89 on the occasion of the Gallery Weekend with the show *Verhandlungen unter Zeitdruck / Negotiations Under Time Pressure* by Andreas Siekmann, who recently participated in *Documenta 11* and *12* as well as in *Sculpture Projects Muenster 07*.

In his works, Andreas Siekmann - who attracted great attention at *Documenta 12* with his roundabout of protagonists of *exclusive* power set up in front of the Fridericianum as well as during *Sculpture Projects Muenster 07* with a large ball of shredded plastic city mascots at the Erbdrostenhof - is essentially dedicated to the analysis of the economic paradigm shift from social market economy to neoliberalism as well as to its impacts on society and urban space. Siekmann critically displays prevailing power relations and conceives utopian counter-models. His unique, narrative image worlds are based on references to art history and mass media as well as on observations drawn from the realm of realpolitik.

In *Verhandlungen unter Zeitdruck / Negotiations Under Time Pressure*, Andreas Siekmann addresses the parameters of economic restructuring in former East Germany after reunification. The central coordination agency of this privatization process was the Treuhandanstalt, seated in the building of the former Reich Air Ministry, today's Ministry of Finance on Wilhelmstraße. Its façade is projected via an outdoor mirror into the gallery spaces. From March 1990 through December 1994, the Treuhandanstalt liquidated 13,800 East-German companies – 15 a day. The transformation from nationally-owned enterprises to incorporated firms, their valorisation, was considered to be the security of an economic consolidation, a precondition for the invisible hands of private economy to bring about a new economic miracle. The history of the Treuhandanstalt is therefore part of the transformation economy that first affected Eastern Europe and then spread across the globe. Its protagonists, e.g., the investment banks and consulting firms, today form an indispensable part of political decision-making processes geared to new forms of optional capitalism. The motto of the Treuhandanstalt's work – "privatization before reconstruction" – produced, as a symptom, unquestionable methods that due to lacking alternatives demanded increasingly rapid liquidations, something which is still continued in today's government techniques.

Andreas Siekmann has recorded this history from 2005 on in 20 graphic sheets. In the process, he developed an anti-subjective pictogram language based on the political constructivism of the *Cologne Progressives* in the 1920s, with which he depicts the four-year work of the Treuhandanstalt both numerically and within a temporal frame of narration. Following stops at the Heidelberger Kunstverein and in the travelling show *Shrinking Cities*, these sheets, which are held exclusively in red and black, were selected to create a *Treuhand-Space* together with prints, silhouettes and paintings. The centre of the show is a *Theatrum Mundi*. Similar to the mechanical figure theatres that were built until the end of the 19th century by disabled or dismissed miners in the regions of Saxony and Thuringia, among other places, and that replicated natural disasters and world events, but also the miners' former workplaces, Siekmann's *Theatrum Mundi* presents the "Stations of a Market Mechanism". Mounted to conveyor belts, Andreas Siekmann has the figures of liquidation and their negotiating parties ride past a backdrop of the institutions and buildings closely linked to the Treuhandanstalt, e.g., the seats of consulting firms or the former GDR Council of State Building, in which the private European School of Management and Technology now resides.

Barbara Buchmaier

We thank Fromut Zschekel for his mechanical expertise.