

# Markus Schinwald

## Vanishing Lessons



Kunsthhaus Bregenz

**February 14 to April 13, 2009**

**Press conference: Thursday, February 12, 12 noon**

**Public shooting: Thursday, February 12, 7 p.m.**

**Opening: Friday, February 13, 2009, 8 p.m.**

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Thematically, the work of Markus Schinwald (\*1973 in Salzburg) centers on the psychological study of space and body, on the unease and the irrational depths of individual and collective being. The artist playfully brings together the most diverse media – from oppressive films to marionette-like sculptures, from reworked historical paintings to designs of prosthetics and clothing – all subtly choreographed into a whole. With his films and built spaces, Markus Schinwald uses fragmentation and disjointed oneiric sequences to produce surprising gaps in the basic narrative structure of his works, which leads to extremely aestheticizing images and crazy shifts of reality levels. With his new series of works for the Kunsthhaus Bregenz, Markus Schinwald will stage a surreal and panoptic array of insatiable wishes using bodies, objects, films, and built spaces in what will be his largest solo exhibition in Austria to date.

On the three top levels of the Kunsthhaus Bregenz, Markus Schinwald will set up three studio sets like for sitcom TV productions. Each of the sets will consist of bleachers with an audience seating capacity of approximately 80; three flat screens, three TV cameras, and a stage backdrop will complete each scene. For a few days prior to the exhibition opening and during the initial weeks of the show, the three cameras will be used to shoot 20-minute-long sitcom-like scenes based on a script by the artist and following his stage directions. These scenes will be played for the visitors on flat screen televisions during the exhibition. The sets will vary on each of the three floors, and the episodes will be played by different groups of about five protagonists. All sets, props, and costumes will be designed by the artist himself.

The sitcom (short for “situational comedy”) is a genre that originated in the USA and which is found today almost exclusively in the form of series on television. One typical characteristic of the classic sitcom is that it is recorded in the studio: the actors perform on a raree-show-like stage. The storyline is usually limited to a few sets, which are retained and used over



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and over. The stage effect is emphasized through the actors' performance toward the front of the stage and by the laughter of the studio guests which the TV viewers hear. Usually, three cameras positioned in a pit between the audience and the stage are used: one camera shoots a wide shot of the action; the other two concentrate on the active characters.

The sequence is later edited using the film material shot of the same action from three different angles. Due to the trivial nature of the everyday situations portrayed in this genre, the sitcom has often also been called a "show about nothing." Because it often addresses social customs and conventions, q 4 neurotic and obsessive behavior, and the mysterious mechanisms of human relationships, the sitcom could be categorized as a comedy of manners in episode form.

On the **first floor** of the KUB, the set is a raree-show-like stage, which uses large mirrored surfaces, a partition wall concealing a passageway, and a cabinet with a secret door for surprise appearances. Here the actors perform using the conventional means of language and gestures.

On the **second floor**, the stage architecture is more open and porous. The space is divided by low partitions that can be used and passed through, and there will also be a nineteenth-century hearse cut in half. The protagonists on this floor will be three pairs of identical twins. There is no speaking anymore; the sound track consists solely of music.

On the **third floor**, the background stage architecture has virtually disappeared and been replaced by rotatable spatial elements. Gymnastics apparatuses – uneven bars, horizontal bar, vaulting horse, rings, etc. – which have been altered by the artist, are the objects used for acting and exercising by five gymnasts. Language and music have been supplanted here by the sounds made when executing the exercises.



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# **KUB-Billboards**

## **Markus Schinwald**

### **Vanishing Lessons**

**January 26 – April 13, 2009**

**Seestraße Bregenz**

Based on certain criteria, Markus Schinwald has been acquiring and collecting nineteenth-century portraits and nudes by forgotten and usually anonymous artists for several years. After carefully restoring these oil paintings, he alters their message through the subtle and subversive introduction of specific elements – from masks and prostheses to details in the bodies or clothing of the figures – thus making them his own. Since the additions and changes imitate the style of the original artist, the observer cannot readily understand how the altering of perception and effect actually works. For the Kunsthaus Bregenz, the artist has selected six details from some of these paintings, turning them into the backdrops of posters that are reminiscent of billboards advertising big film productions.



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## **KUB-Publications**

### **Markus Schinwald Vanishing Lessons**

Through the alienation of space and the human body, Markus Schinwald challenges the normal and its perception in art images. At the Kunsthhaus Bregenz, the subtle shifting of the real in films and stage-like spaces built to resemble television studios and sitcom sets gives rise to new levels of reality and experience. Essays from art history and art and media theory perspectives elucidate Schinwald's complexly staged blurring of the borders between reality, experience, and perception. At the core of the publication are richly presented installation photos supplemented by numerous reproductions of key works from recent years. The artist's book is designed in close cooperation with the artist himself.

#### **Markus Schinwald Vanishing Lessons**

German/English

Ed. by Kunsthhaus Bregenz

Graphic design: Christoph Steinegger, Interkool, Hamburg

Essays by Jörg Heiser and Hans Dieter Huber

Ca. 128 pages, 26 × 23,25 cm

Due to be published: March 2009

Price: ca. € 42

In collaboration with Markus Schinwald a special, limited and signed book edition will also be published.



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## **KUB-Editions**

### **Markus Schinwald Untitled, 2009**

For this artist's edition, two original nineteenth-century lithographs of group portraits were combined, using the computer to process images of individual figures – notable local personages from the Biedermeier period. Special attention was devoted to assuring that these figures retained the characteristic style of the original lithograph and that the additions invisibly blended into the original. Thus, some of these distinguished men appear partially covered, while others wear prosthesis-like appliqués.

### **Markus Schinwald Untitled, 2009**

Pigment print, 50 × 120 cm

Limited edition of 30 copies, numbered and signed

Subscription price during the exhibition: 900 €

Price after the exhibition: 1100 €, price incl. 10% VAT,  
plus postage and packaging

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**Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.**  
**Thursday 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.**