

AUREL SCHEIBLER



Michael Wutz
TALES, LIES AND EXAGGERATIONS

Duration: 13 February - 1 April 2010
Private view: 12 February 2010, 6 – 8 p.m.
Location: Aurel Scheibler, Witzlebenplatz 4
14057 Berlin

The works of the young artist Michael Wutz (*1979) fluctuate between two poles: his fascination for the traditions, cults and rites of primitive tribes or lost cultures and his quotidian urban world.

Michael Wutz's sepia and charcoal drawings address content deemed taboo by our own society such as violence and death. These themes are rendered graphically as tethered skulls and

severed heads used ritually as fetishes or to intimidate enemies. Nevertheless, his work does not coquet with vanitas symbolism and morbidity nor does it rely on shock value. The artist does not focus on the depiction of heads as parts of previously intact bodies in order to emphasize the cruelty of slaughter. Rather, he condenses his motifs aesthetically to form a new whole, thereby emphasizing the head's significance as a symbol.

Large-scale etchings, another mainstay of Michael Wutz's work, aptly demonstrate his unique talent for combining history with the art of telling a tale. World concepts drawn from Christianity, German history, or literature of the fantastic are brought into play to reflect on his own reality. The exhibition at Aurel Scheibler features Michael Wutz's most recent etching and was inspired by Perle [Pearl], the city described in Alfred Kubin's novel *Die andere Seite* [*The Other Side*]. In this novel, haunted houses and crime scenes have been reassembled to create a bizarre town that is magically connected to the body of the city's founder, Claus Patera.

Depicting the borders between dream and reality as well as mixing urban and organic forms are crucial aspects in Wutz's work and are particularly suited to the medium of etching. The complex multi-phase procedure requires the artist to make various decisions and exert control, while also demanding the acceptance of a given—at times uncontrollable—dynamic developed during the chemical process. Technology and man become enmeshed in the creative process of etching.

Michael Wutz's keen interest in the dynamics of the artistic production processes and their relationship to the motif's narrative content are perhaps most apparent in his frequent enhancement and transformation of his etchings. The etchings are cut apart, expanded upon, and recomposed in a digital editing process as animated films. The film created from the etching exhibited here will be premiered at this year's Art Cologne where he has been awarded his own booth by the fair's juried „New Positions“ program. Excerpts from this film will be on view in *Tales, Lies and Exaggerations*.

Michael Wutz studied at the Universität der Künste in Berlin and was a Meisterschüler of Leiko Ikemura. In 2008 he won participation in the exhibition *Yozo Hamaguchi 100th Anniversary International Print Competition and Exhibition* at the Musée Hamaguchi Yozo: Yamasa Collection (MHYYC) in Tokyo. He was awarded First Prize at the Graphic Triennial in Brunssum (NL) in 2009.

Image: Untitled, 2009, painted etching and collage, 16 2/5 x 11 1/2 in.