

STUDIO DABBENI
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Art 36 Basel / 15 - 20.6.05

JOHN HILLIARD

Opening:
Thursday 12 May - 18.00
Duration:
12 May - 15 July 2005
Opening Hours:
Tuesday - Friday
09.30 - 12.00 14.30 - 18.30
Saturday
09.30 - 12.00 14.30 - 17.00
Sunday/Monday Closed

Studio Dabbeni is holding its first one-man exhibition on the work of John Hilliard (Lancaster, 1945), an internationally famous British artist present in major public and private collections. He commenced his photographic work in the early 1970s and it has always featured a conceptual component, mainly investigating the complex relationships between the material reality of photographs and the pretence of the image. In his work, the essential elements peculiar to the photographic medium – e.g. shot, focus and lighting – are used as the subjects of the picture and, at the same time, as the outline of a story, one that remains fragmentary and hypothetical. In this sense, Hilliard uses the photograph “against itself”, not so much to produce a complete picture or expression but to propose images that are never fully conveyed, remaining ambiguous and contradictory. The observer’s gaze is eventually turned on itself; seduced and provoked by motifs inspired by the genres of the cinema and historical/artistic iconography, the observer strives in vain to see an interesting scene – which is cut, half-concealed or blurred at the point of climax. People find themselves *imagining* the most diverse narrative plots and reflecting on the process behind the construction of an image.

Over the last decade, Hilliard has mainly explored this interest in “saying less” is “saying more”, developing ways to subtract information from the picture so as, paradoxically, to make it even more hybrid and enigmatic. The pictures in the exhibition, consisting in 17 small-, medium- and large-format photographs, are a selection of recent works. In some, featuring a multiple superimposition of the same subject photographed from different angles, the references span from evocations of cubist iconography to broad allusions to the artist’s tireless quest, going in circles around his work and always returning to the beginning. Other works based on the combination of black/white and colour, address the contrast between the “temperatures” of the various subjects in question (the lamps used, the entwined emotional relations between the figures photographed etc.). In many cases, the conceptual and formal links are further emphasised by the titles, which help to trigger the observer’s mental processes. In conjunction with this exhibition, Studio Dabbeni is publishing a new issue of the journal *temporale*, containing a previously unpublished text by John Hilliard on his recent works.



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