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Praguebiennale 3 **May 24 – September 16, 2007**
**DER PROZESS. COLLECTIVE MEMORY
AND SOCIAL HISTORY.**
Curated by Marco Scotini

"Somebody must have slandered Josef K. because, without his doing anything wrong, he was arrested one morning."

Kafka, *Der Prozess*

Luca Frei and **Ian Tweedy** will take part in the third edition of the Prague Biennial within the section entitled *Der Prozess. Memoria collettiva e storia sociale (Der Prosezz. Collective Memory and Social History)*, curated by Marco Scotini, with the assistance of Andris Brinkmanis.

Luca Frei is represented by a space consisting of three black walls: a sort of blackboard, which seems perfect for an artist who has investigated the subject of education on several occasions. On one of these walls Frei delineates a chair and table with a slightly inclined surface: these elements are rendered by attaching tape to the surface and removing it after the wall is painted black. Frei's work is inspired by Kafka, and in particular by some sketches from the Czechoslovak writer's notebook, depicting stylised images of a male figure in unusual poses, and in one image the figure is seated at a table. The artist's work is based on the idea of individual freedom from coercion by the economic and social system. Consequently, with its inherent instability and its allusion to a dimension that is open to dialogue, the table represents the difficult challenge of opposing someone who denies free expression. On the end wall the artist has placed posters written in upper-case letters, white on black, as if they had been written in chalk, which ask questions and invite reflection; "Where do we find the knowledge we need?" and "How do we use the information we collect?" are examples of the extremely direct and difficult questions posed. Alternatively, the artist chooses words to which he assigns a strong connotation, such as "exit", or by the reiteration of the word "years". Frei also presents eight works on paper as posters that are characterised by elements that have their roots in the Constructivist movement. The artist has decided to sign them with the name "Words and Images Group", a definition he created in 2004. In his call to the concept of the group cause, Frei's intent is to offer a kind of overture, imagining that his work, with its strong social connotations, can be born from a sort of open research or common commitment. In one of the posters three highly-stylised linked human figures are placed next to the phrase: "A delirium that rises from a world of mud"; this contrasts the extreme lightness achieved by both the use of watercolour and by the choice of colours, and seems to more forcefully delineate the artist's thoughts. "Antidotes" is written in block letters in the upper part of a work that shows a male figure holding a book in one hand while the other arm is raised towards books that seem tossed up into the air, as if to say that culture and education can constitute an "antidote" to the sense of emptiness that connotes present reality.

Ian Tweedy is also represented in *Der Prozess*. The artist has created *Monument 3*, a Wall-Drawing on the external wall that is dedicated to the section, which constitutes an ideal opening and a sort of dividing line for the work of the artists. On the wall Tweedy has drawn a barbed wire fence with a man trying to climb over it. The work represents an attempt at crossing over a barrier in order to enter into history, or perhaps, to escape from it. The artist who was born in Hahn, near Frankfurt, on an American military base, passed many years moving from one base to another. Consequently he is a rootless young man who has always felt like a stranger in the various places he has lived. Starting out as a graffiti and street artist, he later moved on to Wall-Drawings in which he uses images taken from social history and collective portraits borrowed from magazines such as "Life" and "Storia Illustrata". Tweedy explains that as a graffiti artist creates his work over a stratification of posters and spray paint, his interventions upon old book covers, maps, documents and photographs that represent and document an "objective history" come from his desire to use "personal materials" that have passed through many people's hands before coming into his. He creates stories that are told by assembling photographs, documents, drawings and writings. For *Der Prozess* he presents works made up of old images, among them scenes of war, some of which he has intervened upon with paint as in the portrait of soldiers on a battleship. Tweedy, like Frei, makes a compelling reference to a Kafka novel with his presentation of a photograph of a chilly courtroom.

Valentina Bucco