

ACCORDING TO OUR CALENDAR

Nicole Degenhardt // Markus Shimizu // Claudia Weber

Opening: Friday, 30 November 2007, 7-10 p.m.
through 5 January 2008 (Wed.-Sat. 2-7 p.m.)

It's the year 2007 according to our calendar.

To find our way in the here and now in relation to past and future events, our calendar has always served as an indispensable guide. We owe the structure of our year to the Gregorian calendar in use today around the world, and the custom of reckoning years before and after the birth of Christ has been handed down over the centuries as well: conventions that developed in relation to religious conviction and astronomical knowledge, and which have continued to be adapted to global societal developments up to the present day. The absurd fact that Christ, as we now know, actually came into the world in the year 7 *B.C.* exposes our ostensibly objective reckoning of time as a relative, context-dependent and culturally determined construct.

"According to Our Calendar": an ambiguous title that is given a different interpretation in each of the artistic creations at Stedefreund:

The point of departure for **Claudia Weber's** installation is a photograph of two ceramic sculptures from the Tang Dynasty, the originals of which are on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The museum's combination of thousand-year-old ceramics presented on modern Plexiglas is transposed by Weber in response to Stedefreund's prefabricated concrete-slab exhibition space. The artist rearranges fragments of Chinese culture, museum presentation and minimalist concrete construction, subjecting them to a new interpretation beyond linear conceptions of time and historical relation.

In **Nicole Degenhardt's** filmic composition we encounter an old man in close-up, who sits whittling on a woodpile. His manipulations, a grafting procedure, are pointless, as he is working on two sticks cut off from their roots and from life. A second film shows a female counterpart involved in the same activity. The associations opened up by the comparison between grafting and whittling range from Cranach's *Melancholy* to Freudian symbolism. The films complement one another to create a network of relationships between masculinity and femininity, nature and artifice – metamorphoses outside all temporal and spatial relations.

One enters **Markus Shimizu's** installation in a posture that is both literally and figuratively bowed. Out of the darkness, images of pure light and color float through the room. Rotating prisms refract every color of the rainbow. With text fragments and Bible quotes, Shimizu awakens memories of religious ideas about the beginning and end of time and the promise of the supposedly lost paradise.

Carla Orthen M.A.

Appearing at Stedefreund: 15 December, starting at 6 p.m.

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