

Thomas K. Lang Gallery



CUT

Ulrike Lienbacher

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 1st, 2006, 7 p.m.

Introduction: Johanna Hofleitner

Exhibition: February 2nd to March 31st, 2006

Open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Location: Webster University, Berchtoldgasse 1, 1220 Wien

The body is a central theme in my works, as the carrier of both an individual and a socio-cultural story. The way a society deals with the body is an indicator of its values. The discourse on hygiene and health; the relationship with untidiness and cleanliness; the cult of fitness and the wellness craze that have exploded with the growth of the European tourism industry; these are all reference points that I find very interesting in this context.

Cleanliness is order, whereas untidiness is associated with disorder and danger: these are social norms that tell individuals what is valuable and what is considered unworthy.

In my drawings I reiterate the process of dirtying and cleaning, and these actions are somehow forced. The figures rub and dry themselves; they wipe, scrub and towel the paper surface of the drawing as a substitute for the body.

The hair is a symbolically laden fragment of the bodily sphere and of femininity, and I always come back to it – be it an accurate, artful hairdo or a freely falling hair, the carefully crafted exemplary model or the letting yourself go, the falling to pieces, the flowing away.

Loss of control is related to failure anxiety. But the drawings also evoke a very possible scenario where this loss of control and this losing yourself could also bring pleasure. Hence the erotic component of several of my drawings.

The theme of discipline and control can also be detected in my working method. In the plastic works it is evident in the impeccable surfaces, the regular forms and seriality, in the drawings it shows in the precision of the stroke and the finely elaborated details.

In my works I try to strike a balance between openness and a clearly defined content. The wall installations are made up of several drawings which can sometimes be hung close to each other, with their borders touching, other times they can be arranged more freely, but always in such a way as to further stimulate associative thinking. The observer's look jumps from one point of the wall to the other, seeking new connections, turning back or taking another path.

(Ulrike Lienbacher, 2004)