



"BED" by Johan Grimonprez
Opening: 24th September 2011 6.30 - 8.00 p.m.
Special Film Screenings of "Double Take" and "Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y"
on 7th & 21st of October 2011 at 9.00 p.m.
Finissage: 29th October 2011 12.00 - 3.00 p.m.



para_SITE Gallery
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The interactive installation "BED", 2005 - 2010 by internationally renowned Belgium artist Johan Grimonprez oscillates between public and private, drawing the viewer from often hectic public life into a serene private setting in a semi-public context. On first sight the installation shows an empty bed in what resembles a post-colonial English bedroom with flowery wallpaper and draped curtains only partially displaying the opposite house window.

The viewer in front of the gallery interacts with the installation and triggers the sudden jump of a deer on the bed only shortly for the viewer's eye to catch and disappearing in the next second leaving the viewer with only a memory of the dream-like setting of a deer starring dreamily at us.

The looking through a window namely the gallery window into a room with a window through which again a window can be seen opens up our imagination and interest in these rooms which however, can not be satisfied and therewith remain hidden space relating to the heterotopian theory of French philosopher Michel Foucault, who speaks of spaces that are not yet real only by human definition become defined as actual spaces.

The imagination of the viewer adds to this concept and the viewer therewith becomes active participant in the installation on another level, by engagement of her or his imagination, therewith enlarging the private space of the projection into public space. Leading this concept further: the viewer who leaves the installation takes the memory of the installation and the set scenery and keeps it in his private memory wherever she or he goes, spreading the installation or taking part of it to her or his own private space.

The artist refers to the work Untitled, 1992 by Felix Gonzales Torres, who was commissioned an installation of 24 billboards throughout New York that all displayed the black and white image of a double bed. Felix Gonzales Torres installation of the very private view of a double bed taken to the extremely busy inner city of New York adds to the blurring of public and private space and is mocked by the artist undermining the general notion of billboards designed to attract maximum attention through extreme colouring and flash imagery opposing to this a very calm and static black and white picture scene.

The shift from public to private in the special setting of Johan Grimonprez' installation "BED" at para_SITE Gallery is driven to the top as boundaries from public to private are blurred entirely. On the one side the Gallery being a space with public access is seemingly transformed into a private space, appearing like a bedroom however, in truth only displaying the image of a private space and therefore equalling a fictional, in this moment non-existent space again in the sense of Foucault's heterotopia concept.

In addition to the billboard concept of Felix Gonzales Torres, Grimonprez introduces a new component, motion adding to the original idea of the serene image in public space and adds the surprise moment the viewer is confronted with whilst viewing the installation. By looking through the window on the scene of an empty bedroom, the viewer at first is being put into the position of a peeping Tom, only in the next moment to discover the most graspingly beautiful image of the deer jumping onto the bed and therewith becoming part of a carefully staged fairytale.

The viewer is shortly interrupted in her or his privacy as an anonymous person in public space being drawn into a very private but in truth virtually distant setting in the semi public context of the para_SITE Gallery.

Johan Grimonprez shares his very personal view of the otherwise anonymous room, creating a heterotopian space that only exists temporarily and relies on the interaction of the viewer to be experienced in its entity.