

For immediate release

MICHAËL BORREMANS

Taking Turns

February 24 – March 25, 2009



Taking Turns, 2009 (film still). 35mm film transferred to DVD

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings and films by Belgian artist Michaël Borremans. This is the first time the artist's films will be shown in the United States, and is also the world premier of *Taking Turns*.

Taking Turns is the artist's third solo show at David Zwirner. Previous shows at the gallery include *Horse Hunting* (2006) and *Trickland* (2003), which was the artist's first solo exhibition in the United States.

For the current show at David Zwirner, Borremans has created five new paintings and is presenting three films: *The Feeding*, *The Storm*, and *Taking Turns*.

For this exhibition, the gallery (519 West 19th Street) has been divided into two relatively equal spaces. Upon entering the first space, a 35mm film projector shows a loop of *The Storm* as a large-scale projection, reaching close to 15 feet in height and 23 feet in width on the gallery wall. In the film, three black men, wearing identical cream-colored uniforms (a mix of work clothes and stage costumes), are sitting slumped in chairs in the corner of a white, empty room. The harsh light of a naked bulb alters the shot by modifying the intensity of the shadows moving imperceptibly on the surface of the wall.¹

The second gallery space introduces an intimate presentation of two other 35mm films, *The Feeding* and *Taking Turns*, both which have been transferred to DVDs and viewed within wall-mounted wooden frames. The films are shown alongside the exhibition's five oil on canvas paintings: *The Apron*, *Earthlight Room*, *The Load*, *The Load (II)*, *The Load (III)*.

In *The Feeding*, the three figures from *The Storm* reappear, standing around enormous reams of white cardboard that give the impression of levitating above a table covered with a spotless cloth in the middle of a room.² In *Taking Turns*, a woman holds the torso of a life-sized mannequin, and slowly moves and spins the torso on top of a horizontal surface. There is an ambiguity between what is real and what is artificial, as their two faces and figures overlap and rotate in the film's frames. Once again, the theme of the double, or the doppelgänger, is a device encountered throughout Borremans' oeuvre.³

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Formally and thematically, Borremans' films are closely related to his two-dimensional work. They are shifting 'tableaux vivants' with poetic titles, in which the artist very gradually, with subtle camera work, creates an oppressive atmosphere. He uses a fixed camera position or deliberately zooms in on certain details of the scenery, body parts, faces, or clothing. With slight light-dark fluctuations, flowing edited shots or the repetition of certain actions, Borremans builds up a gripping but subdued suspense.⁴

Beginning in April, the work from the exhibition at David Zwirner, along with additional drawings, will be presented at kestnergesellschaft in Hannover, Germany.

Borremans first presented a film projection as an integral part of a room-filled installation at the Berlin Biennale in 2006. In 2007, his cinematic work was then shown at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam, in his first solo exhibition in The Netherlands. In 2008, the show traveled to Centro de Artes Visuais in Coimbra, Portugal. In 2008, he also had shows at Gallery Koyanagi in Tokyo, Japan and Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp, Belgium.

Other solo exhibitions include La Maison Rouge in Paris (2006), Kunsthalle Bremerhaven in Bremerhaven, Germany (2004), and Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Basel, Switzerland (2004). In 2005, he had a one-person exhibition of paintings and drawings at S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Belgium. The paintings exhibition then traveled to Parasol Unit in London, England, the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin, Ireland; the drawing exhibition traveled to the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Ohio in the United States.

In November 2008, Borremans received the *Overbeck-Preis für Bildende Kunst der Gemeinnützigen* in Lübeck, Germany. This prize was accompanied by a solo exhibition at the museum, Overbeck-Gesellschaft.

Michaël Borremans (born 1963, Geraardsbergen, Belgium) lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. He received his M.F.A. from Hogeschool voor Wetenschap en Kunst, Campus St. Lucas, Ghent. His work is held in the collections of major museums, including, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, all in Los Angeles, California; High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent, Belgium; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Notes

1 Philippe-Alain Michaud, "Devil's Dolls: On the Film-Paintings of Michaël Borremans," *Michaël Borremans: Weight* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008), p. 58.

2 Ibid. p. 67.

3 Delfim Sardo, "The Enchanted Wanderer," *Michaël Borremans: Weight* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008), p. 35.

4 de Appel Arts Centre, exhibition notes on website