

# BEN BROWN

- *Press Release for immediate release* -

24 April – 30 June 2006

Thomas Ruff – *Sterne (Stars)*

Ben Brown Fine Arts is showing seven of Thomas Ruff's large scale *Sterne (Stars)* photographs in the gallery space as an installation. For this exhibition the gallery has been blackened in order to give more gravitas to the entire show and more importantly to each individual work. The installed photographs range from sparsely populated night skies to almost overpowering brightly lit pictures showing other galaxies which can be mistaken for clouds in the sky.

Ruff has always had a fascination with astronomy. His attempt at photographing night sky failed due to the lack of detail captured in the pictures he had taken. Ruff's equipment could not render the detail he wanted as well as air and light pollution added to the difficulties of capturing the beautiful constellations. His solution was to take observation shots from the European Southern Observatory (ESO) based in the Andes in Chile.

Ruff created these impressive photographs from copies of over 1,000 negatives bought from the ESO. He has cropped and produced large formats of chosen sections of the negatives he acquired. The negatives were blown up to massive formats and framed in dark wooden frame. The pictures in the exhibition are approximately 260 x 186 cm in size. Their titles correspond to the astronomical coordinates of the negatives making reference to professional astronomy. These outstanding photographs on the one hand have a very scientific feel to them and on the other hand remind us of highly abstract paintings.

The gallery will also show additional work for sale in a second room: *Nudes*, erotic pictures appropriated from the Internet and digitally altered; *m.d.p.n.* (mercato del pesce napoli/Fishmarket in Naples); *Nacht (Nights)*, influenced by the first Gulf War, where Ruff took night photographs in Germany with the help of night vision and *Substrat*, pictures appropriated from the Internet and digitally altered to create colorful and abstract pictures.

Ruff has exhibited widely since 1981, with solo shows at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1989), Centre National de la Photographie in Paris (1997), Chabot Museum in Rotterdam (2001), and Tate Liverpool (2003), among others. His work has been shown in BiNationale at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (1988), *New Work: A New Generation* at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1990), *Documenta* (1992), *Venice Biennale* (1995), *Biennale of Sydney* (1996), *COSMOS: From Romanticism to the Avant-Garde* at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal (1999), *Picturing Media: Modern Photographs from the Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York* (2001), and *Bienal de São Paulo* (2002). He lives and works in Düsseldorf.

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