

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

MATTHIAS SCHALLER - *DISPORTRAITS*

20 January – 21 April 2011

Private View - 19 January - 2011 6-8 pm

Press Release for Immediate Release

Ben Brown Fine Arts announces an exhibition of new works by German photographer Matthias Schaller. *Disportraits* explores in the artist's typical striking visual signature, the correlation between the concepts of distance and space, of presence and absence, and ultimately, the human condition. As the artist stated:

"As with all my series, the leading argument is the variation on portrait. I had the sensation that I could try to either make portraits of mankind, or of individuals. I liked the idea of having a connection between the individual and space, (in this case the prominent figure of Galileo), and with suits in a more abstract sense, as you can only imagine a human figure in the astronaut suit, but you cannot see it. It is anonymous.

I think the astronaut suit is a metaphor for human beings. Through them I am able in a visual and simple way to show that I believe we are all astronauts. We are all alone, we are isolated from each other. And we are all trying by verbal and non-verbal communication to get in contact with each other. To not feel alone. Each individual is a space with its own rules, materials, history and relations to the space outside of itself."

Starting in 2000 with his meticulous study of Andreas Gursky's studio, Schaller has developed his artistic practice by focusing mostly on interiors void of people, such as photographers' and architects' studios (*Werkbildnis I* and *II*), the Cardinals' desks of the Roman Curia in the Vatican (*Purple Desk*), the piano nobile interiors on Venice's Grand Canal (*Controfacciata*), 150 Italian opera houses (*Fratelli d'Italia*) and artists' palettes (*Das Meisterstück*).

Disportraits takes its place within the artist's oeuvre by exploring the relationship between reality and representation. In these multi-paneled works, we are shown what appear to be astronauts, their bodies floating in space and moving through the sequence of images. In reality, the astronauts' suits are empty and the impression of movement is conveyed by the reflection of the different phases of the moon on the visors' surface. Schaller's works continuously investigate the power of what has been left behind, and how the people who inhabited spaces (be they Palazzi or suits) leave a silent, yet indelible mark long after they have gone.

Matthias Schaller - Biography

Matthias Schaller was born in Dillingen (Germany) in 1965. He lives in Venice, Italy and New York City, USA. He studied Cultural Anthropology in Hamburg, Göttingen and Siena. Schaller received the Ci Art Award 2004. Amongst a number of successful solo exhibitions are "*Studio Gursky*", Goethe-Institut, New York City, USA; "*Werkbildnis*", Biennale di Architettura, Venezia, Italy; and "*Matthias Schaller 2000 – 2005*", Art Basel, Miami, USA.

For further details please contact Ms. Whitney Ferrare at +852 2522 9600 or whitney@benbrownfinearts.com

LONDON: 21 CORK STREET FIRST FLOOR LONDON W1S 3LZ AND 12 BROOK'S MEWS LONDON W1S 4DG
T+44 (0)20 7734 8888 INFO@BENBROWNFINEARTS.COM F+44 (0)20 7734 8892

HONG KONG: 301 PEDDER BUILDING 12 PEDDER STREET CENTRAL HONG KONG
T+852 2522 9600 HKOFFICE@BENBROWNFINEARTS.COM

WWW.BENBROWNFINEARTS.COM