

PRESS RELEASE

David Lynch – Kaiserring Recipient of the City of Goslar 2010

Exhibition in the Mönchehaus Museum, Goslar, 9 Oct. 2010 – 30 Jan. 2011

On 9 October 2010 David Lynch will be presented with the Kaiserring awarded by the City of Goslar. The award has been made annually since 1975, and is one of the most prestigious distinctions for visual artists worldwide. So those who have hitherto known David Lynch, born in Missoula, Montana, in 1946, only as an internationally famous director, the creator of such films as “Elephant Man” and “Blue Velvet”, both nominated for the Oscar for Best Director, or of “Wild at Heart”, for which he won the Palme d’Or at the International Film Festival in Cannes in 1990, will have the opportunity in Goslar of getting to know him as a visual artist: “David, the Painter”, as the art critic Werner Spies once entitled an essay about his work.

The award is accompanied by a wide-ranging exhibition in the Mönchehaus Museum in Goslar, at which the artist’s paintings, photographs, prints and drawings will be on show. This œuvre is no less disturbing than Lynch’s films. Here too he takes us on eerie expeditions to the dark sides of human existence, where yearning and lust, fear and terror are the dominant emotions. The shock essential for the dramatic impact of his films also characterizes his work as a painter. One picture dating from 2004 shows a man being torn apart by a bullet; blood is spurting from his body, while the black eye orbits reveal that he is already dead.

Laconically, as the title of the work, Lynch notes in the picture: “This Man Was Shot 0.9502 Seconds Ago”. A pictorial narrative that does not, however, explain the sudden violence. We do not know who fired the bullet, or why. The existence and identity of the man remain obscure. The time and place are unspecified. But what is made brutally clear is this: violence is a part of our reality. It may also become a part of own lives at any time. We may become a victim, or, perhaps even more shocking, a perpetrator. Another picture, dating from 2008/09 hints at precisely this. A woman looking like a shaggy monster is sitting on a bed, with a little dog beside her. In her right hand she holds a dangerous-looking electric knife. From her mouth emerges the coarse command: “Change the Fucking Channel, Fuckface!”

David Lynch’s pictures are pictures of war. They stage a panopticon of terror and show what people can do to other people. This applies above all to his “Distorted Nudes” photographs (2004). The nudes (existing photos which he has found) are digitally taken apart and deformed. They resemble the protagonists in his films “Eraserhead” or “Elephant Man”. But his works are not just confrontations with others. Above all, David Lynch confronts us with ourselves. His works are initiations. What is at stake is our identity. “No hay banda” (There’s No Orchestra), announces the compere in “Mulholland Drive”. And yet we hear the music; the purported reality is fictitious. So when are we living in the truth, and when in a lie?

The story of how Lynch became a director points to the internal link between his pictures and his films. One day he was working on a painting when he had the lucid impression that the painting was filling up with noise, light and movement. It was a kind of epiphany. This was what triggered his career as a film director. In his films, the narrative core of the pictures unfolds. The themes, though, are the same as in his paintings. The search by human beings for themselves. His journeys into the radiant darkness of his obsessions and into the abysses of his soul. And the shocking discoveries he makes in the process. David Lynch shrouds them in the velvet gloss of his art. This makes them no less terrible, but beautiful. Terribly beautiful!

Michael Stoeber

**Sat. 9 Oct. 2010 at 11 a.m. – Presentation of the Kaiserring to David Lynch in the Kaiserpfalz;
Eulogy: Prof. Werner Spies, Paris; followed at c. 12.30 p.m. by the opening of the exhibition at the
Mönchehaus Museum, Goslar**