

PRESS RELEASE

Body 5 Arrives TOBIAS BERNSTRUP

Dates: September 9th –October 16th 2010
Opening: September 9th at 19.30



ADN Galeria presents Tobias Bernstrup's second solo show at the gallery, '**Body 5 Arrives**'.

Tobias Bernstrup is one of Sweden's most emblematic performance and new media artists, being internationally active for more than a decade. Over the years his works have been exhibited in a large number of major institutions, museums and galleries worldwide: Marco de Vigo, Domus Artium Salamanca, Palais de Tokyo, Basel Museum Für Gegenwartskunst, Biennale de Lyon, Busan Biennale, Shanghai Duolun MoMA, North Miami MoCA, MASS MoCA, The Kitchen New York, Moderna Museet and Gothenburg Art Museum.

Bernstrup has constructed his own unmistakable performance persona in elaborate costumes of glossy latex and heavy makeup during these years. Without establishing a distinction between high culture, popular or underground culture, he mixes references as eclectic as video-game aesthetics, pop culture, science fiction, gothic noir, new technologies, electronic music or contemporary urban architecture, all sources of inspiration for him. He is especially interested in creating zones of contact and contamination, in opposition with any claim for purity in the method or in language.

Fascinated by virtual worlds and the way they produce our desires and fetishisms, Bernstrup addresses questions about identity and gender and the blurred border between the virtual and the real, letting both spheres intertwine. He appropriates iconographies and identities from different imaginaries and introduce them into real or virtual scenarios, by the means of his body, the ideal surface where to project and actualize fantasies.

It is possible indeed to discern two modalities in his work. On the one hand, the conception of virtual worlds or videogames, in which Bernstrup usually intervenes by altering the characters' stereotypes; on the other hand, the elaboration of complex real-time performances, centered on a figure he decides to embody. This double presence, as an avatar into virtual worlds and as a performer of fictitious identities into the real world, opens an in-between place in which Bernstrup takes pleasure to be.



His alter-egos seem to come out of a science-fiction movie, a scene from a cabaret or some sado-masochist fantasies. They do not convey a defined sexual identity, but maintain rather voluntarily a certain ambiguity, mixing and crossing different signs of identification that correspond to excluding social categories. Bernstrup's sculptures, avatars or alter egos play with this dialectic of sameness/otherness and make more porous the separation between living and lifeless bodies, material and immaterial presences. They generate a liminal universe, a kind of threshold where what is usually considered as unright or abnormal can finally operate out of every normative schemes. Flirting with socially forbidden or repressed themes as sadomasochism, fetishism, transvestism, Bernstrup's work questions individual and collective censorship, self-limitation, and castration of desires that can be freed only in a virtual or lenient context.

The artist's performances materialize in fact a process of dilution of the spatial, temporal and – above all – social borders. They combine assumed kitsch, display of technological means, voyeurism, latent eroticism and melancholia. While he gets inspiration from glam rock stars and embodies Hollywoodian glamour's codes, Bernstrup shifts from one register to another, alternating performative expressivity and hieratic poses. His romantic pop songs about neon lights, cars and computers, mix Synth-pop, Romantic, New Wave or Industrial contribute to create a subtle and unreal environment for the performances. As a performing artist and musician, Tobias Bernstrup has released indeed several CD's and vinyl records of his own compositions. The new EP "1984" (on Dutch label *Enfant Terrible*) will be released during the exhibition.



In this new exhibition, Bernstrup presents paintings, costume sketches, videos and sculptural works. One of the central works is a life size sculpture that mimics the artist concentrated in a fictitious play, as a mirror image. It is based on his most recent performance project ASFR, presented at the MADRE Museum of Contemporary art in Naples in 2009. *A.S.F.R* refers to a group practising robot fetishism, characterized by an attraction towards humanoid and non-humanoid robots, and eventually the appropriation of similar behaviours. Inspired by this reference and by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* as well, Bernstrup has created a robotic costume in transparent and brilliant latex, completed by a breastplate and a silver mask.



Virtual world as the permissive mirror of a too narrow real world; a dichotomy Bernstrup tries to undermine and subject to sophisticated plays of hybridation.

The new book 'Almost Human' produced by Gothenburg Art Museum and Tobias Bernstrup will be presented during the exhibition.

For more information about the exhibition please contact the gallery or visit www.bernstrup.com