

PAUL CHAN

October 21 – December 17, 2006

Curator: Daniel Birnbaum in collaboration with Elisabeth Millqvist

Paul Chan, born 1973 in Hong Kong. Lives and works in New York.

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*... a meditation on a disintegrating world. Our world?*

In the first room of Paul Chan's exhibition *1st and 2nd Light* (both 2005) are installed. The works are part of a series *The 7 Lights*. The artist has completed four of the seven so far. The works are each 14 minutes long digital video animations projected on the floor. In *1st Light* we see objects falling and floating upwards defying gravity. At times only fields of color are projected. Pure color indicates "nighttime" and shadows are cast in the "daylight hours". Among the objects falling are also people. One cannot help connecting the image with the attack on the World Trade Center 9/11, 2001. But most of all the work creates a sensation of another temporal dimension. Chan is interested in other types of temporality than the chronological, to make the linear time collapse. Paul Chan says that "*The 7 Lights* is a work about "light and light that has been "struck out" (shadows)." The strike through the words in the titles emphasize double readings as both light and the lack of light. The curator of the exhibition Daniel Birnbaum adds in his catalogue essay regarding *The 7 Lights*: "It is also – this must be obvious even to a viewer uninterested in messianic themes – a meditation on a world falling apart. Our world?"

Portikus in Frankfurt - where Daniel Birnbaum is the director - will also open an exhibition with Paul Chan. Portikus will exhibit the third work in the series –*3rd Light* (2005). The work involves a sculptural element, a 3-dimensional replica of the table in Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*.

Magasin 3 is also showing the video animation *Happiness (Finally) After 35,000 Years of Civilization (after Henry Darger and Charles Fourier)*, (2000-2003). The story is a dramatisation of how we could achieve a better world, based on the ideas of the utopian socialist thinker Charles Fourier (1772-1837), which Chan has illustrated with an imagery inspired by the eccentric Henry Darger (1892-1973). Two years ago, Magasin 3 showed parts of Darger's life work, a violent epic consisting of thousands of pages

of illustrations and writings. Paul Chan says that he has animated this in a way he believes Darger would have worked if he had been alive today and had access to the internet and knowledge about contemporary art and photography. The ideas of these two eccentrics on an alternative existence blend into a work that comprises of both unlimited revelry and devastating war, against a lush green backdrop.

See also Paul Chan's website: <http://www.nationalphilistine.com>