

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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For Immediate Release (March 16, 2006)

ANNIKA LARSSON'S VIDEOS PULSE WITH EROTIC TENSION

Beginning March 16, Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art presents *Power Plays*, the first Canadian solo exhibition of the work of Swedish artist Annika Larsson. *Power Plays* includes two distinct video installations: *Dog*, 2001 and *Poliisi*, 2001. This exhibition is curated by Scott McLeod, accompanied by an essay by Shirley Madill, and presented in association with the Images Festival. Prefix gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Every image in Annika Larsson's videos is chosen with the same sharp precision that guides her selection of actors, costumes, music and props. A sense of overt obsession is matched with a clarity in execution that does not allow for accidents. In writing about Larsson's work, Shirley Madill reflects that by "Emphasizing sparseness and repetition, Larsson successfully relays the obsessive nature of desire by evoking erotic tension, even in the most minute gestures." In many of her works, that eroticism is propelled by the driving electronica soundtracks of Tobias Bernstrup.

Dog displays a loyalty ritual in which a dog's body serves as an emotional channel between two men. With no clear purpose or intentionality, the subjects appear to interact as in a void. This emptiness, or vacuum, stands in contrast to the heroic signs created by the music and casting. Seduction is strongly present throughout the work, while the props and costumes, including the men's well-pressed business suits and a heavy dog chain, reinforce the video's measured precision. This excessive tension serves to make the erotic undertones even more perverse.

Poliisi revolves around four characters: three men dressed as riot policemen wearing helmets, protection vests, shin-guards and batons, and a jockey-like character dressed in riding boots, a yellow bomber-jacket and knee-pads. The impetus for the video was Larsson's observation of the oversized shin-guards worn by Parisian riot police. What started as an obsession with the material component became altered through the lens of social consciousness and ultimately became a study of fetishism. Shot at night in the monumental surroundings of the Senate Square in Helsinki, a lone and primarily unconscious man characterizes the demonstration, and his passivity, in stature, state, and attire, serves to attenuate the confrontation of the protest.

Annika Larsson was born in 1972 in Stockholm and graduated from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm in 2000. She currently lives and works in New York and Stockholm. Her work has been shown at ICA (London), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Istanbul Biennial and Art Basel. A solo exhibition of her work will be presented at Dunkers Kulturhus (Helsingborg, Sweden) in 2007. Annika Larsson is represented by Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York and Andrehn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm.

Presentation Partner:



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Prefix is pleased to host a reception for *Power Plays* on Saturday, April 15 from 1-5 PM at Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto. The artist, curator and essayist will be present. Admission is free. The exhibition continues until April 22, 2006.

Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is a non-profit, charitable organization based in Toronto. Prefix fosters the appreciation and understanding of contemporary photographic, media and digital arts through exhibitions, publications and related activities.

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