



Istituto Svizzero di Roma

Via Ludovisi 48
I-00187 Roma

t +39 06 420 42 1
f +39 06 420 42 420
roma@istitutosvizzero.it
www.istitutosvizzero.it

Press Release

Strange Comfort (Afforded by the Profession)

**Maria Thereza Alves, Ross Birrell and David Harding,
Nancy Davenport, Moyra Davey, Jimmie Durham, Dunja Herzog,
Cécile Hummel, Goshka Macuga, Franco Vaccari, Danh Vo**

Opening:

Saturday May 8, 2010, 6.30 p.m.

Istituto Svizzero di Roma
Via Liguria 20 - 00187 Rome
T. +39 06 420 42 620
arte@istitutosvizzero.it
www.istitutosvizzero.it

Sunday May 9, 2010, 4.30 p.m.

Ross Birrell and David Harding

Special guided tour of the Non-Catholic Cemetery
with Catherine Payling, Director of the
Keats-Shelley House

May 9 - September 25, 2010

Open Monday-Friday 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. / 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday 3 - 7 p.m.

Closed on Sundays and bank holidays

Free entrance

Curated by **Adam Szymczyk** and **Salvatore Lacagnina**, the exhibition is organized by the **Istituto Svizzero di Roma** in collaboration with **Keats-Shelley House** and **Kunsthalle Basel**, with the support of the **City of Basel, culture department**.

The exhibition “Strange Comfort (Afforded by the Profession)” is a project that draws inspiration from an ‘Italian’ short story “Strange Comfort Afforded by the Profession” by a British writer **Malcolm Lowry** (1909-1957). Lowry describes a visit to the house in Piazza di Spagna where the English poet **John Keats** died of tuberculosis in 1821 and which was, in 1909, turned into a memorial, housing an outstanding collection of books and documents on English Romanticism. The story's protagonist, Sigbjørn Wilderness, visits the Keats House and takes notes while reflecting on manuscripts, relics and artefacts exhibited in the museum. Lowry's story was published posthumously in 1961 in the volume of his late, loosely related, travelogue-style prose pieces “Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place”, along with two other ‘Italian’ stories “Elephant and Colosseum” and “Present Estate of Pompeii” - the latter contains a description of a guided tour that a Canadian couple takes in the ruins of Pompeii. The “Strange Comfort” story provides a model of a writer's intimate encounter with texts and

Enti Finanziatori

Fondazione svizzera per la cultura Pro Helvetia
Segreteria di Stato per l'educazione e la ricerca
Ufficio federale della cultura
Ufficio federale delle costruzioni e della logistica

Partner

BSI
Canton Ticino
Città di Lugano
Università della Svizzera italiana



stories of other writers - among them Keats, Poe, Gogol and Kafka - and describes a method of private study that seems to reverberate in the practice of many contemporary artists. In similar spirit, the exhibition focuses on the “strange comfort” afforded by curatorial practice not as merely a means to making exhibitions but as a comprehensive praxis of interpreting, transforming and unifying knowledge from several different fields in the humanities; among them the study of history, literature and art. The artists in the show - **Maria Thereza Alves** (Brazil, 1961), **Ross Birrell** (Glasgow, 1969) and **David Harding** (Glasgow, 1938), **Nancy Davenport** (Vancouver, 1965), **Moyra Davey** (Canada, 1958), **Jimmie Durham** (Cherokee, USA, 1940), **Dunja Herzog** (Basel, 1976), **Cécile Hummel** (Gottlieben, Switzerland, 1962, ISR member 1990-1991), **Goshka Macuga** (Warsaw, 1967), **Franco Vaccari** (Modena, Italy, 1936), **Danh Vo** (Saigon, 1975) - share the preference for idiosyncratic research that counters received readings of cultural history and opens ways to new interpretations, enabling production of critical narratives.

The exhibition will include a number of international artists who will present their work in several venues located within the walking distance between the Istituto Svizzero on Via Ludovisi and the Keats-Shelley House in Piazza di Spagna - some famous and some of only local interest.

The exhibition is curated by **Adam Szymczyk**, Director of **Kunsthalle Basel**, and co-curated by **Salvatore Lacagnina**, Head of the Artistic Program at the **Istituto Svizzero in Rome**. It is organized by the Istituto Svizzero in Rome. Another version of the show will be presented from June 13 to August 22, 2010 at **Kunsthalle Basel**.

Exhibition venues:

Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Via Liguria 20, 00187 Rome
Monday - Friday 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. / 3 - 6 p.m. - Saturday 3 - 7 p.m.
closed on Sundays and bank holidays
Free entrance
www.istitutosvizzero.it

St. Isidore Church, Via degli Artisti 41, 00187 Rome
only by appointment
www.st-isidore-rome.org

Antiquary Bookshop C.E. Rappaport, Via Sistina 23, 00187 Rome
Monday - Friday 9.30 - 12.30 a.m. / 3 - 7 p.m. - Saturday only by appointment
closed on Sundays
Free entrance
www.rappaport.it

The Keats-Shelley House, Piazza di Spagna 26, 00187 Rome
Monday - Friday 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. / 3 - 5 p.m. - Saturday only by appointment
Closed on Sundays
www.keats-shelley-house.org

Non-Catholic Cemetery, Via Caio Cestio 6, 00153 Rome
Monday - Saturday 9.30 a.m. - 5 p.m. (last entrance at 4.30 p.m.)
Sunday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
www.protestantcemetery.it

Press Office:

Alessandra Santerini, tel. 335.6853767, alessandrasanterini@gmail.com
Chiara Costa, tel. 331.7001172, chiara.a.costa@gmail.com