BAWAG
Contemporary
BAWAG FOUNDATION

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Mike Bouchet
Retreat

May 7 – June 30, 2010
Opening: Thursday, May 6, 7:00 p.m.
Press preview: Thursday, May 6, 10:30 a.m.

Using a variety of media, Mike Bouchet, who was born in California in 1970 and lives in Frankfurt am Main, investigates social phenomena and processes of our time. Whether he develops his own diet coke and ships it to China or paints coke pictures with it, has jeans sewn for *Carpe Denim* in Colombia and lets them rain down from the sky on the very place they were made as an American promise of happiness, or mirrors the foam of luxury and success in the design of his Jacuzzis: he always finds apposite pictures for complex contexts in his performances, installations, and sculptures. Redefining concepts of authorship, ownership, and aura, Bouchet has developed an unmistakable style. His works, which may strike us as mere ironical appropriations at first sight, register the prevailing themes of our time: the predominance of entertainment, sex, and consumerism, as well as the obsession with celebrities. Whatever his approach, Mike Bouchet is concerned with a political issue: the question which value is attached to an object, an artist's work, or the artist himself. A question he raises in playing with what is a commodity or might be one at least.

The BAWAG Contemporary exhibition *Retreat* will be presenting a number of recent works by the artist. The title of the show plays with the various meanings of the word which revolve around security and temporary withdrawal – whether of an individual or a group, whether for spiritual, health or life-style reasons, whether motivated by sociological, ecological or – not least – strategic reasons in corporate business. The presentation assembles different facets of this context of retreat such as hamburgers, Jacuzzis, and a golf facility: facets with which various social phenomena and fantasies are linked. Fantasies about gold, for example, in the case of *Canburger*, a project for which Bouchet had 10,000 hamburgers in golden tins produced in East Germany in 2007. While *Canburger* only alludes to the objects' use in the form of a quotation, as it were – the hamburgers having become inedible in the meantime – the Jacuzzis are basically usable. Bizarre feel-good sceneries for Silvio Berlusconi and the Olsen twins are the most recent products in this series in which Bouchet has been focusing on the

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whirlpool as an American status symbol and treating the role of the artist-entrepreneur with irony since 1998. Being thrown back on free enterprise, the artist-entrepreneur finds himself forced to produce also lighter, more current commodities which can be repeated or varied if necessary. Both the Jacuzzis and the indoor golf facility play with the issue of participation. The golf setting extends the wellness promise satirized in the Jacuzzis to a real offer. Combining off-color and richly allusive aspects, the installation explores the manifold relationships between art, performance, and entertainment.

BAWAG Contemporary
Accompanying events
each Wednesday at 9 p.m.
Guided tours
each Thursday at 6 p.m.
Admission free

Curator:
Dr. Christine Kintisch
Management:
Elisabeth Hofbauer
Technical coordination:
Olli Aigner & Team
Concerts curator:
Stephen Mathewson
Architecture:
propeller z
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Golfing facility sponsor:

NIKEGOLF

BAWAG
PSK

Mike Bouchet
Biography

Born in Castro Valley, California in 1970
Lives and works in Frankfurt

Selected solo exhibitions

2010 Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt/Main
BAWAG Contemporary, Wien
2009 Otero Plassart Gallery, Los Angeles
16 x 9 Action Film, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt/Main
2008 *CANBURGER*, Galerie GP & N Vallois, Paris*
16 x 9 Action Film, Filmpräsentation, La Pagode, Galerie GP & N Vallois, Paris
Raging Control, Maccarone Inc., New York
Central de Arte Contemporáneo, Guadalajara
New New Age Film Festival, Galerie Parisa Kind, Frankfurt/Main
2007 *Wall and Floor – Shitrock and Tapestry Cartoons*, The Box, Los Angeles
Current Jacuzzis/Reich Room, MC Kunst, Los Angeles
Reaction Time, Circus Gallery, Los Angeles
16 x 9 Action Film, Filmpräsentation, MOCA, Los Angeles
Almost Every City in the World, Project Room, Galerie GP & N Vallois, Paris
2006 *Recent Jacuzzis/Almost Every City in the World*, Galerie Michael Neff, Frankfurt/Main
2005 *Top, Back and Bottom of Mind Awareness*, Maccarone Inc., New York
Der soziographische Blick: 10. Mike Bouchet, New Jacuzzis – Carmen Electra, Tatjana Gsell, K. Lagerfeld, Jude Law, Robert Mugabe, Jack Welch, Kunstraum Innsbruck*
2004 *Carpe Denim*, Galerie Michael Neff, Frankfurt/Main
2003 *Overhead Baggage Treatment*, Maccarone Inc., New York
1999 *Business on Sunset*, BOSS Exhibitions, Los Angeles
1993 AB Gallery, Los Angeles

Group exhibitions

2009 53rd Biennale di Venezia, Kurator: Daniel Birnbaum
2008 *Meet me around the corner*, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo
No Leftovers, Kunsthalle Bern
An Unruly History of the Readymade, Jumex Collection, Mexico City
The Practice of Everyday life, Feinkost Galerie, Berlin
Zidovi na ulici / Walls in the Street, Siemens Arts Program and Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade

Garage Sale, Galerie Parisa Kind, Frankfurt/Main
Working Men, Kuratoren: Paul Ardenne und Barbara Polla, Galerie Annalise Forever, Genf*
2007 *Œuvres Encombrantes*, Galerie GP & N Vallois, Paris
27 Timer, Hollesgard, Dänemark
Pawnshop, e-flux, New York
Mind Hacking II, Münster
Herbert Fuchs – Verbale, Workshop, Kulturgasthaus Bierstindl, Innsbruck
Quotidian, BUIA Gallery, New York
2nd Moscow Biennale*
2006 *5 Billion Years*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris*
Uncertain States of America, Serpentine Gallery, London; CCS, Bard College, New York; Reykjavik Art Museum, Reykjavik*
20 Artists Live, Innsbruck
E-flux Video Rental, Seoul, Korea; Antwerpen
Mobile: Suro Collection, Triangle Project Space, San Antonio, Texas
Sculpture Park, Lahr*
Nice Fine Arts, Offenburg
4. Berlin Biennale*
Palme d'Or Television Pitch, Frankfurt/Main
Space Boomerang, Swiss Institute, New York
2005 *Strich, Zeichnung, Bild*, BAWAG Foundation, Wien*
Uncertain States of America, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Art, Oslo*
Off Key, Kunsthalle Bern*
La Vista Hermosa, Liste, Basel
Do You Like Stuff?, Swiss Institute, New York
Greater New York 2005, PS1, New York
Situational Prosthetics, New Langston Art Center, San Francisco
E-flux Video Rental, KunstWerke Berlin; Frankfurt/Main
Bread & Butter, Mehdi Chouakri Gallery, Berlin
2004 *Dedicated to a Proposition, Extra City*, Center for Contemporary Art Antwerpen
Sculpture now, Galerie Michael Neff, Frankfurt/Main
Kotzrohr and Popular Ceramics, Videoprogramm, Wilkinson Gallery, London
E-flux Video Rental, e-flux, New York
High Desert Test Sites, Los Angeles
2003 *Hands up, baby, hands up!*, Oldenburger Kunstverein
2002 *Out of True*, Santa Barbara University Art Museum, Santa Barbara
2001 *Casino 2001*, 1st Quadriennale of Contemporary Art, SMAK, Gent*
2000 *Sebastian Clough and Mike Bouchet*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York
Life After The Squirrel, Location One, New York
1997 *Giverny Jeans*, Galerie Brigitte March, Stuttgart
SnowBall, mit Jason Rhoades and Peter Bonde, Biennale Venezia
1996 *Size Matters*, Special K Projects, Los Angeles
1994 *Common Denomination Language Expo*, FAR, Los Angeles
1993 *Slum Loard*, Main Street Gallery, Napa, Kalifornien
In Disposal, Broadway Arts Complex, Santa Monica, Kalifornien

* Catalogue