

## Press release

Paul Graham

30th March – 22th May 2004, Tuesday – Saturday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

We are delighted to announce Paul Graham's first solo exhibition in our gallery and to present a selection of large-format photographs from his most recent series, "American Night", for the first time in Germany.

Paul Graham's photography explores the border area between art and reportage, between *pissoir* walls and war-torn landscapes in Northern Ireland. He first attracted attention in the late 80s with his documentary series of colour photographs commenting on the radical reshaping of British society under Margaret Thatcher ("Beyond Caring") or conveying the tensions of the conflict in Northern Ireland ("Troubled Land"). Only when one looks closer does his pictorial strategy reveal the searing topicality of the scenes he depicts. The seemingly idyllic Irish landscapes prove to be images of a war zone.

"American Night" came into being between 1998-2002 in the sprawling outskirts of large North American cities such as Los Angeles, Memphis, Detroit, New York and Atlanta. Graham focuses on the unarticulated yet omnipresent fracture running through contemporary America, the social contrasts in the age of hypercapitalism; haves and have-nots, inclusion and marginalisation, black and white.

The majority of the series, comprising 63 large-format photos of urban landscapes, is dominated by blinding white light. The intentionally over-exposed photographs trigger a sense of having stepped out of the shadows into the midday sun and being dazzled by an overwhelming brightness. At the edge of an out-of-town highway or a car park; we discover a single figure, which, despite generally being framed at the centre of the image, seems to vanish in the desolate wastes of the urban landscape. Alongside these works, Graham presents a series of dark "street portraits"; here individuals are picked out as if by a spotlight from the deep shadowy canyons of city streets. In counterpoint to these works, a number of photos present the dream of a detached suburban house with a double garage and a luscious green lawn set against a bright blue sky. The only sign of a human presence is the new car parked in the driveway.

The full series is contained in the eponymous book published by Steidl/Mack (Paul Graham, "American Night", 136 pages with 63 colour photographs, Steidl/Mack, 2003, ISBN 3-88243-919-X, 65,- €).

In this extraordinary book, Steidl/Mack is also working right at the limits of what is possible in printing technology.

Paul Graham was born in 1956 in England and lives in New York. Since the mid-80s, Graham's work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Tate Gallery in London, Fotomuseum Winterthur and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg.

Sebastian Diaz Morales | A K Dolven | Michel François | Meschac Gaba | Paul Graham | Hans Hemmert | Jonathan Hernández | Thomas Huber | Marko Lehanka | Julie Meheretu | Aernout Mik | Santu Mofokeng | Jean-Luc Moulène | Paul Pfeiffer | Peter Pommerer | Bojan Sarcevic | Erik Schmidt | Christian Schumann | Thomas Schütte | Fred Tomaselli | Sophie Tottie | Janaina Tschäpe | Luc Tuymans | Mark Wallinger