

PRESSRELEASE

**DOKOUPIL – CANDLE SOOT PAINTINGS**

26 August – 30 October 2010

Galerie Andrea Caratsch is pleased to present from the 26<sup>th</sup> of August to the 30<sup>th</sup> of October a selection of large candle soot paintings by the Czech-born artist Dokoupil.

The candle soot paintings, a major preoccupation for Dokoupil since the end of the 1980s, may be considered the most known and important series of his very varied artistic production. To „paint“ images by means of soot is an idea, which is exclusively Dokoupil's and which he developed from scratch. In 1989, after months of searching for an organic painting derived from nature, the artist is forced to admit that his talents as a classical impressionist painter are limited. However, the imperative to paint persists – but how? Facing similar problems, his colleague painter Roberto Cabot who is experimenting with Renaissance painting techniques, shows him a canvas primed with candle soot in preparation for the layer of oil paint. Dokoupil senses immediately that this could lead him towards resolving his existential artistic issues.

Dokoupil starts by hanging canvases upside down from the ceiling and projects an image on to the surface from below. With a candle Dokoupil blacks out the darker areas of the projection. Despite the technically induced irregularities, the subject remains immediately identifiable. Subject matters vary: from newspaper cut-outs and everyday scenes to breathtaking leopards, and from intimate nudes to hardcore pornography.

The soot paintings seem to leverage a breakthrough towards a long desired artistic freedom. Dokoupil paints the images, which surround him or appear before his inner eye bluntly and radically, yet without ever falling for the banal. Quite the contrary, in these paintings Dokoupil's hedonist excitement and tension come along with a deeply felt and inevitable sense of vanity. Surely, neither the artist nor the beholder can neglect that since Renaissance times, the just-extinguished candle with its vanishing soot trail remains a recurrent symbol for the transience of life.

Born in 1954 in Krnov (in former Czechoslovakia), Dokoupil and his family emigrated via Austria to Germany in 1968. He studied Art in Cologne, Frankfurt, and at the Cooper Union in New York. Dokoupil now resides and works in Berlin, Madrid, Prague and Rio de Janeiro. His conceptual oeuvre includes a multiplicity of diverse picture series incorporating newly devised techniques and iconographies.

The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM  
and on Saturday from 11 AM to 5 PM.