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Ruud van Empel

World: New Photographs

Opening reception: Friday, February 16, 2007
February 16 – March 17, 2007

Stux Gallery is pleased to present Dutch artist **Ruud van Empel's** second solo exhibition at the Stux Gallery. For this exhibition, van Empel continues his exploration into fantastic and illusionary worlds, presenting thoroughly unique photographs that allow viewers a voyeuristic glimpse into unknown and seemingly impossible settings filled with evocatively harmless childlike characters.

These high gloss and richly saturated photographs, inhabited by seemingly "lost" characters including prepubescent children and digitally collaged landscapes, create a striking balance between the real and the unreal, the possible and the impossible. The photographs function as uncanny digitalized "fairytales," created through the mastery and manipulation of digital technology, confounding the conventionally sensitive emotional cues often coupled with this subject matter. All of the photoworks are comprised of hundreds of individual photographs that were taken by the artist himself, then digitally compiled to produce what, in reality, would be impossible to capture in one, or even multiple film exposures.

The juxtaposition of these hyper-realistic elements, lushly filled backgrounds with the haunting gaze of children, creates a mysterious relationship between two conspicuously diverse visual worlds. This undulation, forcing the viewer to move from one "world" to the other, subverts any possible trace of narrative. The lush settings for the photoworks, forests, lily pads and sunken groves, although appearing to have come from nature, are in fact imagined digital conglomerations. In van Empel's works, associations can be made to the paintings of the "Naïve Realists" and in particular to Henri Rousseau's late virgin forest pictures.

Ruud van Empel has exhibited in major museums and galleries around the world with exhibitions at the Groninger Museum, Groningen, NL; Torch Gallery, Amsterdam, NL; TZR Galerie, DE; The Chelsea Art Museum, NY; Museum of Photographic Arts, CA; Art Cologne, DE; Museum de Valkhof, NE; The George Eastman House, NY; Galeria Berini, Barcelona, ES; Quatrieme Biennale internationale, Belgium, NL; Frisia Museum, Spanbroek, NL.

For further information please contact the gallery at Joshua@stuxgallery.com