

## *Eternal Soup, Sudden Clarity*

Freddy Dewe Mathews

24/04 – 22/05/15

Space In Between (SIB) is delighted to present *Eternal Soup, Sudden Clarity* by Freddy Dewe Mathews, the artist's second solo project with the gallery and the second expression of this new series of work.

Developed whilst on residency in the Swiss Alps at Lendi Projects in the Engadin Valley, *Eternal Soup, Sudden Clarity* presents a series of responses to the very particular cultural resonance of the area. It looks at the legacy of health tourism in the high Alps at the turn of the Twentieth Century; the commingling of the ill in what was at that time, the most remote of locations. The work reflects on how the landscape informed those who came to live in it, who in turn transformed the landscape into a symbol of their removal from normal society. Here, the cult of illness and its perceived potential for existential contemplation may even have been seen as a gift.

*Eternal Soup, Sudden Clarity* includes a two-screen 16mm film installation, sculpture, photography and works on paper, and takes much inspiration from the 1924 novel *Der Zauberberg* (The Magic Mountain) by Thomas Mann. Filmed at the assumed location of the book at the International Sanatorium Bergof, *Interior Portrait II* responds to the way that fiction has grown since the demise of tuberculosis treatment centers in the area. Particularly of interest to Dewe Mathews is one of the central chapters in *Der Zauberberg* called "Forschungen" (Research), which focuses on a narration through the consciousness of the main character Hans Castorp. Sitting on his sanatorium balcony, looking out over the Alps, he reads through prominent biological texts of the time... The passage charts his growing understanding of the nature of Man's existence (and therefore his own) as he examines the "primal tissues of life and death"<sup>1</sup>.

This passive, or un-acting, gaze is a key element to *Interior Portrait II* and is underlined by the custom-made 16mm looping systems that play the images ad infinitum. The films appear to show almost no change yet the offset loops will rarely play the same two frames together, creating an experience that is both close to reality but fundamentally removed from it.

The section bent and powder coated sculpture - *Paimio Variations* - is closely derived from the furniture of Alvar & Aino Aalto designed for the Paimio Sanatorium in Finland. It draws parallels between the modernising movement at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the treatment of patients with tuberculosis at that time. The idea that TB became an agent for change - in the re-conception of design and the structure of the home - is a key element of this body of work.

*Sites of Desire (Series)* are a group of works produced as duplicates using carbon copy paper. Each print relates to a moment or aspect of the narrative of *Der Zauberberg* that Dewe

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<sup>1</sup> AS Byatt, Introduction to The Magic Mountain. P.xvi

Mathews has sought to re-create using the specific landscape of its setting. The novel is an amalgamation of Mann's own experiences visiting his ill wife in Davos, but during the time since its publication many places have gone to great lengths to cultivate the legend of the book – attempting to blend fiction and reality.

*Untitled* is a photograph taken by the artist on the ascent to the top of Piz Palü. In this work a representation of a parallel with the erotic vision in the chapter "Forschungen" is created, culminating (in the narrative) with Hans Castorp exhausting his reading and falling into a dream of Clavdia Chauchat.

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Freddy Dewe Mathews uses archival and research material to produce artworks that look at human impositions on landscape and community. These examples of interaction between the physical world and culture hope to show how one influences the other; feeding, developing and creating new forms in fluctuation of meaning and influence.

Recent solo exhibitions include; *Ritschercha*, Lendi Projects, Celerina, Switzerland (2014); *Milk*, Kiosko Galeria Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (2013); *Bouvetøya, The Shadow Line, 54°25'S, 3°21'E*, Space In Between, London (2012). Awards and residencies include; Engadin Valley Residency, Switzerland, supported by The Artist International Development Fund and The Gasworks International Fellowship at Kiosko, Santa Cruz, Bolivia. *Eternal Soup, Sudden Clarity* is generously supported by the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, Switzerland, Arts Council England and SPACE, London.

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Off-site at SPACE  
+ Further works at SIB  
24/04 – 22/05/15  
(By appointment only)

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