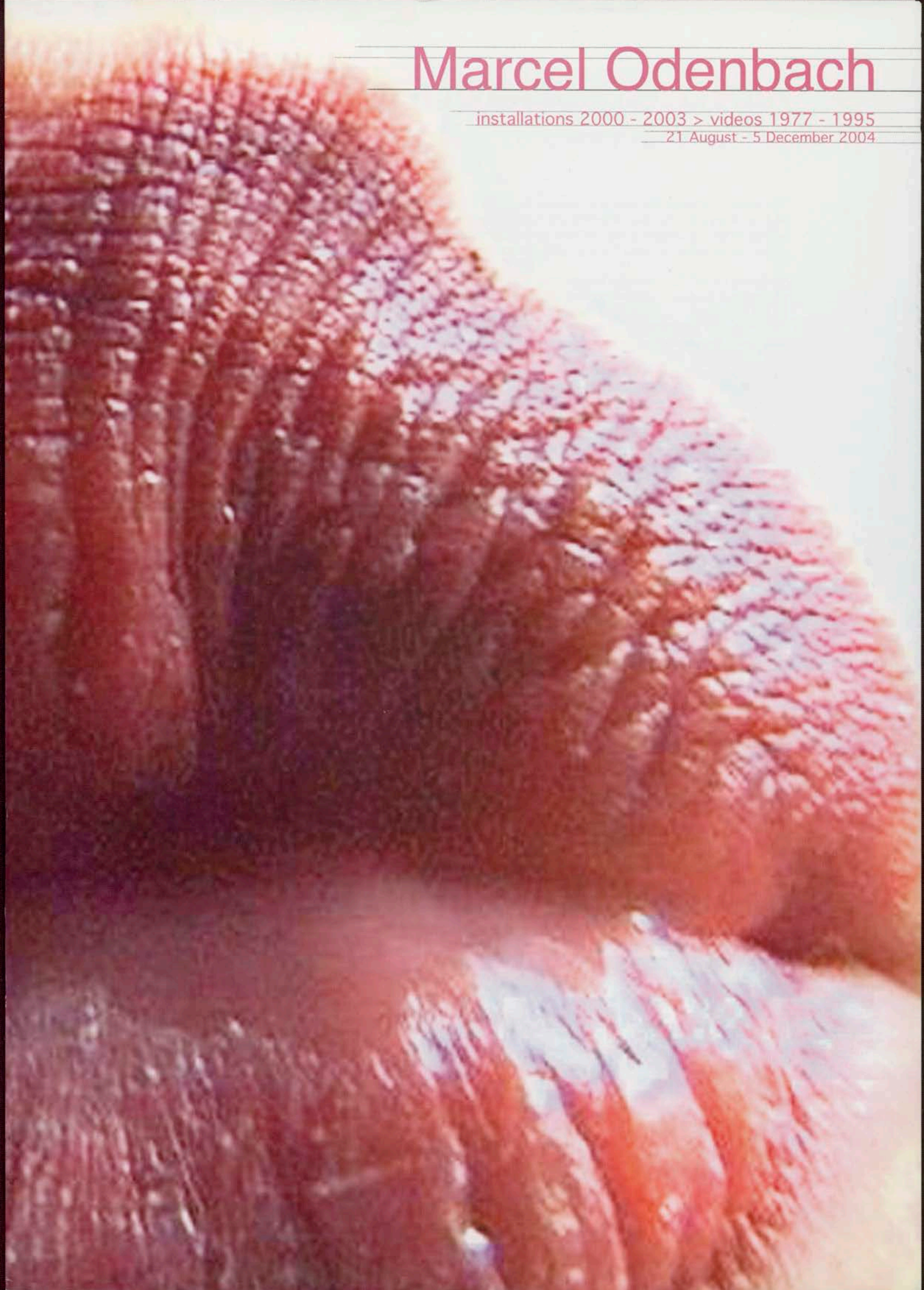


Marcel Odenbach

installations 2000 - 2003 > videos 1977 - 1995

21 August - 5 December 2004



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The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery is pleased to present a major survey exhibition of leading German contemporary artist Marcel Odenbach. It is an exhibition that brings together four recent video installations and two programmes of video works spanning two decades, by one of the foremost European pioneers of video art. The video installations are presented in Gallery 4, while the two video programmes are presented in the Gallery Theatre

While the use of video as an art medium dates back to the 1960s, it is only in the last decade that video has become a mainstream feature of contemporary art practice. For three decades Marcel Odenbach has been a leading innovator in the medium. As a result Odenbach has been the recipient of recent major museum surveys in New York, Frankfurt and Amsterdam, while his extensive record of exhibitions includes participation in the last Istanbul and Sao Paulo Biennales.

Marcel Odenbach has remained at the forefront of new developments since he produced his earliest video works in the mid-1970s. His experiments in the areas of narrative, production techniques and multiple channel presentation and projection established much of the ground for contemporary video art practice.

From the outset Odenbach's work has addressed current social and political issues through the lens of recent history. Lying just below the surface of all of his work is an awareness of Germany's own turbulent history in the 20th century. His starting point is his own relation to society as a native German. From this base he meditates on issues of the moment that have both personal and global significance. His installation *It happened on a Thursday* 2002 is a good example. It features footage of the 9/11 World Trade Centre attack but its main focus is the daily routine of people at the site of an act of terrorism that occurred near where he lives in Germany.

Similarly his installation *The story of man* 2003 can be read as a response to rising concerns over the situation of the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, but it also has a personal aspect as both Kurds and Turks are sizable and visible immigrant groups in Germany. Odenbach alludes to a history of oppression of the Kurdish people by referencing the film *yo!* 1982 made by Kurdish Director Yilmaz Güney; a film that won the *Palme d'Or* in 1982 at the Cannes film festival.



Männergeschichten (video stills) 2003



Innere Sicherheit (video stills) 2001

Classic cinema is a frequent reference point in Odenbach's work. *It happened on a Thursday* pays homage to filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard and his 1967 masterpiece *Weekend* while the installation *Too beautiful to be true* 2000, indirectly cites Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini and his film *City of women* 1981. The most dominant reference to cinema is found in the single channel work *1000 murders* 1983. This work draws primarily on popular and mainly Hollywood films from the 1960s through to the early 1980s, where various cinematic scenes of violence and murder are grouped into categories. It is a work that examines the compression of history memory and representation through the televisual medium and its consequent invocation of a sense of artifice and detachment.

If on the one hand Odenbach's video works comment on the way images in our media saturated society are rendered superficial and therefore lack depth and attachment to reality, then on the other hand the works explore the latent psychological power of both cinematic and documentary film footage. Odenbach frequently

reconfigures existing historical, archival footage cinematic footage with his own footage. The resulting overlay is used to explore subliminal connections to events that have political or traumatic overtones. In so doing Odenbach implicates both himself and the viewer in a subjective sense in the lack of innocence implicit in archetypal imagery.

Above all Odenbach's ability to probe the relationships between personal and political identity and between history and memory, establishes intimate emotional connections with the viewer. It is this aspect that makes his work so resonant.

Marcel Odenbach: installations 2000-2003 > videos 1977-1995 is supported by the Goethe Institut, Wellington.

Installations 2000 - 2003

Zu schön um wahr zu sein (Too beautiful to be true) 2000

DVD single-channel, monitor

Innere Sicherheit (Internal security) 2001

DVD single-channel installation projection, louver blinds, 2400 x 3200 mm, 8'55" looped

Es war an einem Donnerstag (It happened on a Thursday) 2002

DVD single-channel projection, 10'02" looped

Männergeschichten (The story of man) 2003

DVD twin-channel projection, 10'09" looped

Videos 1977 - 1995

The programme charts the development of Odenbach's concerns and the simultaneous development of video camera and editing technology. From the outset Odenbach's works are inherently political.



Zu schön um wahr zu sein (video still) 2000

As the videos move from live-action video in the earliest two works through to more sophisticated splicing and editing in works such as *Estar de pie es no caerse* 1989 Odenbach's targets widen, as he is able to incorporate mass media images seamlessly into the flow of his work. His masterpiece work *1000 murders* 1983 - which plays as a stand alone programme - splices violent scenes from dozens of film classics as well as infamous television moments. Odenbach is pointing to the implication of video technology (his working medium) in the global proliferation of screen violence.



Marcel Odenbach

Marcel Odenbach: The catalogue

Marcel Odenbach's publication is the latest in an acclaimed series of monographic catalogues published by the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, including *Christopher Williams: Poetry must be made by all!* 2001 and *Fiona Clark: Go girl* 2002.

Exhibition curator Gregory Burke, who has been following Odenbach's work since the 1980s, writes an overview of his practice. German curator Tobias Berger's essay focuses on the recent installations. This will be an exciting source book on the history of artist's video.

Available in October for \$34.95 from the Gallery's Art and Design Shop, or email artanddesign@govettbrewster.com to place an order.

Programme 1 (in running order)

53 minutes 30 seconds

Sich selbst bei laune halten oder die spielverderber (To stay in a good mood or the spoil sports) 1977, 12' 53"

Dialog zwischen Ost und West (The dialogue between East and West) 1978, 3' 43"

Die distanz zwischen mir und meinen verlusten (The distance between me and my losses) 1983, 10' 14"

As if memories could deceive me 1986, 17' 25"

Estar de pie es no caerse (Standing is not falling) 1989, 4' 53"

Ständig auf dem sprung sein (Constantly on the move) 1995, 5' 42"

Programme 2

42 minutes 24 seconds

1000 murders 1983 "Als könnte es auch mir an den kragen gehen", 42' 24"

Playing times

Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

10.30am - 1.30pm: Programme 1

1.30pm - 5.00pm: Programme 2

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

10.30am - 1.30pm: Programme 2

1.30pm - 5.00pm: Programme 1

Public programmes

National lecture series

Auckland - 12.00 Tuesday 17 August

Auckland Art Gallery

New Plymouth - 6.00pm Tuesday 24 August

Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (cover charge applies)

Wellington - 6.00pm Thursday 26 August

New Zealand Film Archive

Special event: *The politics of curating*

Govett-Brewster Art Gallery 12.30pm Sunday 22 August

Marcel Odenbach joins leading international curators Gregory Burke, Ihor Holubizky, Niklas Östholm, and Dr. Britta Schmitz for a panel discussion of curatorial ethics and responsibilities in the face of political pressure.

Govett-Brewster Art Gallery

The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery is a museum that fosters the development and interpretation of contemporary art.



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