

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

Kerstin Schuetz-Mueller  
Austrian Cultural Forum New York  
(212) 319 5300 ext. 203  
ksm@acfny.org



Esther STOCKER, *Untitled* (2011),  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo by David Plakke

The Austrian Cultural Forum New York  
presents

# FÜNF RÄUME

MAY 24 - SEP 5, 2011

Opening Reception: Monday May 23, 6 – 8 PM

**Participating Artists:** Daniel DOMIG, Clemens HOLLERER, Zenita KOMAD & Michael KIENZER, Valentin RUHRY, and Esther STOCKER

*Fünf Räume* presents new, site-specific works by emerging Austrian artists, each transforming one of five distinct gallery spaces in the **Austrian Cultural Forum New York**. All participants, despite their success and renown in Europe and elsewhere, have for the most part not yet been shown in the United States. Thus, *Fünf Räume* (German for 'Five Rooms') allows viewers to experience something unique and original while at the same time providing a glimpse into each artist's pluridisciplinary practice, primarily within painting, sculpture and installation.

Starting, as it were, at square one, the artists' installations relate strongly to their previous bodies of work, exploring space, site-specificity and the third dimension. Additionally, the installations will present the intricate architecture of the Austrian Cultural Forum New York's gallery space from a fresh perspective and will thus allow viewers to experience it in a new light.

Each artist brings something radically different to the table - be it subject matter or their use of material - resulting in a visual representation of the dialogue and zeitgeist surrounding contemporary art-making in Austria. At first glance, the artists appear to employ the visual language of Minimalism. However, upon further investigation, each piece reveals itself to exist within the historical rubric of Austrian artistic practice, touching on many of its universal themes, including an engagement with technology, politics, and spirituality.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

In his paintings and installations, **Daniel Domig**, born 1983 in Vancouver, Canada, takes an anthropological approach to the human psyche. His work explores contemporary painting and its self-awareness. In the very process of painting, Domig's figures emerge as identities in constant negotiation, torn between civilized and primitive drives. For ***Fünf Räume***, Domig presents a site-specific construction, which functions as a space within a space, establishing a distinction between being inside or outside of the piece. The piece relates to the surrounding architectural space and addresses more primal issues of construction, layering, and visuality as well as their relation to human identity. A graduate of the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, Domig currently lives and works in Vienna.

**Clemens Hollerer**, born 1975 in Bruck an der Mur, Austria, works in a variety of media, including site-specific installations, sculpture, and photography. His works deal with construction and de-construction, with architecture in transition, and with transformative processes of space. He has been fascinated with construction sites since he was a child, seeing them as a mirror of contemporary human life – flexible, mobile, and ever-changing. His works are reactions to spaces and changing environments, reflecting the rhythms inherent in geometries. His installation for ***Fünf Räume***, titled *On the Other Side*, alludes to a forbidden territory typically delineated by a fence. Adapted from a series of photographs of construction sites, these elements are distorted and rearranged. The forms will challenge the viewer's perception of the complex exhibition space, react to many of the architectural elements of the building, and cause the viewer to consider the deeper meaning of borders within a metropolitan city. Hollerer studied photography at the Euregio College of Fine Art Photography in Kefermarkt and enrolled in the postgraduate program of the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Belgium. He lives and works in Graz, Austria.

Born in Klagenfurt, Austria in 1980, **Zenita Komad** studied stage design and graphics before working in painting, film, photography, performance, installation, and sculpture. In a witty, ironic manner, Komad's paintings and collages often comment on spirituality, consciousness, and desire, referencing popular and higher culture. Through word play and collage techniques, Zenita Komad's works raise questions about the relationships between symbols and meanings, and, consequently, about language, misunderstanding, and meaning in general. For ***Fünf Räume***, Komad invited Austrian sculptor **Michael Kienzer** to collaborate. Kienzer, born 1962 in Steyr, Austria, is known for reimagining mundane materials to disturb their intended function. Their complex and allegorical installation has myriad layers of meaning and deep connections to mythology, poetry, spirituality, and mysticism. Based loosely on the fabled invention of chess, the work centers on the number 64 – the number of squares on a chessboard. The 16 mirrored chairs, positioned like dancers in a ballet, represent the pawns, which for Komad are the soul of the game. Upon entering the space, the installation becomes a situation of self-reflection. Both artists currently live and work in Vienna.

**Valentin Ruhry**, born in Graz, Austria in 1982, has worked primarily in sculpture. In an analytical, scientific approach, he creates works inspired by technological achievements though it is often the out-dated, obsolete ideas once believed to be visionary that inspire him. Regularly examining the formal and aesthetic aspects of objects, one of his major themes is light and its modulation of volume as well as physically measureable qualities such as tension, force, and friction. For ***Fünf Räume***, Ruhry will present two new works, one of which was created specifically

for the Austrian Cultural Forum New York and is directly inspired by the building's unique architecture and materials. The second work, composed of scores of illuminated rocker switches, speaks to both an interest in vintage technology and the visual language of Minimalism. Ruhry, a graduate of the Vienna Academy of Applied Arts, currently lives and works in Vienna.

**Esther Stocker**, born 1974 in the mainly German-speaking province of South Tyrol, Italy, works with paintings, murals, and installations. She applies and deconstructs geometric shapes and grid structures both on canvas and into space, onto the floors, ceilings, and walls of gallery spaces, creating immersive installations which, by manipulating spatial perception, seem to explode into the third dimension, leaving the viewers disoriented in their own illusions. By calling attention to the fact that "we know nothing about space," she questions Euclidian geometry and the assumption of space as a given entity, seen from a very specific point of view. For **Fünf Räume**, Stocker will create two new, site-specific installations with strong connections to her established practice, yet integrated into the architecture of the exhibition space. Stocker studied at the Pasadena Art Center College of Design and currently lives and works in Vienna.

**Curators:** David Harper and Andreas Stadler

####

**Austrian Cultural Forum New York**  
**11 East 52nd St. (betw. Madison & 5th)**  
**New York, NY 10022**  
**(212) 319 5300**  
**[www.acfny.org](http://www.acfny.org)**

**Open Daily 10 AM – 6 PM**  
**Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events is free.**  
**Reserve tickets online at [www.acfny.org](http://www.acfny.org) or call (212) 319 5300 ext 222.**

*Directions*

*Subway:*

*E, M Train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street*

*B, D, F, M Train to 47-50 Street/Rockefeller Center*

*E, M, 6 Train to 51st Street/Lexington Avenue*

*Bus:*

*M 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 to 53rd Street*