

Mathias Schmied: *I hate the way I love*

March 15—April 21, 2007

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 15, 6 to 8 PM

Josée Bienvenu gallery is pleased to present “I hate the way I love”, Mathias Schmied’s first solo exhibition in New York. Mathias Schmied manipulates comic strips and magazine images to create wall installations and drawings that are a play between seductive, raw pop imagery and precise, polished manipulation. In most of his pieces, impulsive gesture and calculated obliteration coexist.

In Mathias Schmied’s universe of cut-out graffiti, pin-ups and super-heroes, the old debate about form and color—Delacroix versus Ingres in Baudelaire’s century—is re-enacted in the age of Playboy and Spiderman, with the lusciousness of spray paint and glossy pictures and the cruelty of a scalpel. The immediacy of found images—pages ripped off from Men’s magazines or cheap comic books—meets the painstaking gesture of the X-acto blade, fragmenting the image to reduce it to a skeleton or to a web of fine strips.

Every work is a dissection: Mathias Schmied’s imagination operates by removing and remixing. His *Arousing Mirages* are tattoos on paper. The outline and the flesh of a body get tattooed into a pristine sheet of blank cardboard by slicing thin lines with a sharp blade. The ink from the magazine page transfers slowly into the background, transforming a sometimes hard-core scene into a soft evanescent image as some areas are left untouched.

Backgrounds is a series of strip teases in reverse. A model in a suggestive pose is hidden behind a curtain of vertical strips of paper, a paper-shredding job just interrupted at the contours of the body on Playboy and Penthouse girls. The fine bands of paper fall back and cover the body like fake eyelashes inviting the viewer to look behind the curtain.

Pin-ups are a group of cheerful pin-up girls literally extracted from a magazine and pinned-up to the wall like rare insect specimens after a careful anatomical dissection. Their insides have been emptied out and graciously unroll outside of their bodies. *Movie Soundtracks* are isolated onomatopoeias plastified and pinned up to the wall—a visual demonstration of silent noise.

Mathias Schmied was born in 1976 in Berne, Switzerland. He received his MFA from the Ecole des Beaux-arts, Lyon, France in 2003. He Lives and works in Crest, a small village outside of Lyon. He was recently included in the *Art on Paper Biennial* at the Weatherspoon Museum in Greensboro, North Carolina. His drawings are included in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.