

Press Release
Zurich, 1 February 2007

Besides drawings of cockpits, hospitals and kitchens by Thomas Müllenbach, Kunsthaus Zürich also shows his new series 'Nuclear Power Stations'.

From 2 February until 22 April 2007 Kunsthaus Zürich is showing 'Thomas Müllenbach. Graphite – The Large Drawings'. The Kunsthaus is the first museum to bring together the most recent, very large-scale graphite drawings by Müllenbach. Made between 1999 and 2006, these drawings depict the technical accoutrements of modern life – from kitchen fittings to the equipment in an operating theater to the navigation instruments in the cockpit of a MD-11 and the operations room of the nuclear power station of Chernobyl.

Müllenbach has lived in Zurich since 1972 and teaches at the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Zürich. As a painter and draughtsman, he comes from a generation of visual artists whose engagement with the techniques available to artists both today and in the past has led them to develop their own handwriting. Müllenbach never seeks out his subject matter on location, but takes his inspiration from the press and printed media instead. His drawings can be up to 200 centimetres in height. Although they may appear fragile in reproductions, the 13 originals which are on show are intensely powerful. The graphite is applied forcefully to the special paper in three-millimetre thick lines.

NAVIGATING THE VISUALS IN THE COCKPIT AND THE OR

Müllenbach neither observes from a distance nor is he content merely to represent the surface of things. Instead his gaze is captivated by the uncertainty of the interstices in the scenes he is drawing, as in the white openings of the cabin windows in an aeroplane or between the navigation instruments and displays in the cockpit of the Swissair plane that crashed off the Canadian coast near Halifax in 1998. As a rule, passengers, artists and museum visitors would have no business in there. And would they even be able to see that a catastrophe was imminent?

The hospital drawings induce a similar response in the viewer. The connection between the viewer's gaze and the live-saving devices in an operation room give the viewer plenty of room for contemplative looking. The openness in Müllenbach's forms is pitted against his acute eye for ornamental patterns. Müllenbach guides his graphite stick (and with it our gaze) with a sure touch. His work is about more than providing artificial life support for the metaphysics of the material world.

CHERNOBYL. GRAPHITE DELIVERING DEATH AND ART

Müllenbach's most recent drawings are of the nuclear power stations. Burning graphite was a significant factor in the ensuing widespread radioactive contamination left by the burnt out reactor of Chernobyl disaster of April 1986. The controversy surrounding the consequences of that moment is continually rekindled by new scientific and technological discoveries. The event itself sheds important light on the way we handle a material we thought we had under control – fixed on paper and exhibited in the midst of a precious art collection, whose security and preservation is a high priority for a civilised society.

CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue published by JRP Ringier with contributions by Christoph Doswald, Dorothea Strauss and a foreword by the curator of the exhibition, Bernhard von Waldkirch. It is available for CHF 38.– at the Kunsthaus Shop and contains 104 pages and 35 images.

Supported by the Erna and Curt Burgauer Foundation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthhaus.ch

Open Tues–Thurs 10 a.m.–9 p.m., Fri–Sun 10 a.m.–5 p.m., closed on Mondays

Public Holidays: Easter 5–9 April 10 a.m.–5 pm.

Admission: CHF 10.–/6.– concessions/CHF 6.– per head for groups of 20 or more

Guided Tours/Groups

Public: Thurs 22 February 7.30 p.m., Thurs 15 March 7.30 p.m.

Private: by arrangement, 60 mins in duration, up to 15 participants CHF 175.–.

Bookings: Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84 (Mon–Fri 9 a.m.–12 noon). Groups and classes with their own leaders are urgently recommended to register in advance.

Advanced Ticket Sales

Kombi-Ticket RailAway/SBB with 10% reduction on rail travel and admission fee. Available at all Swiss rail stations and from Rail Service, tel.: 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min.), Group rates available.

Advanced ticket sales points of the Magasins Fnac: Switzerland: Tel. +33 1 4157 3212, www.fnac.ch. France: Carrefour, Tel. 0892 684 694 (0.34 €/Min.), www.fnac.com. Belgium: Tel. 0 900 00 600 (0.45 €/Min.), www.fnac.be.

For further press information and visual materials, please contact

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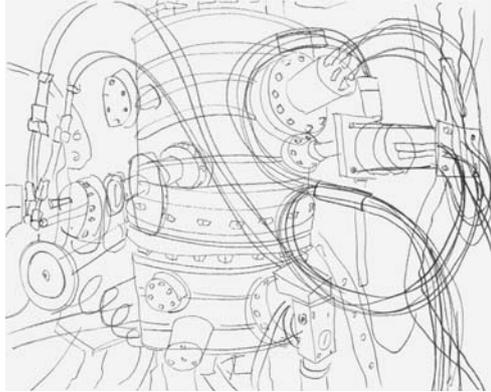
Thomas Müllenbach. Graphit – Die grossen Zeichnungen

Kunsthhaus Zürich

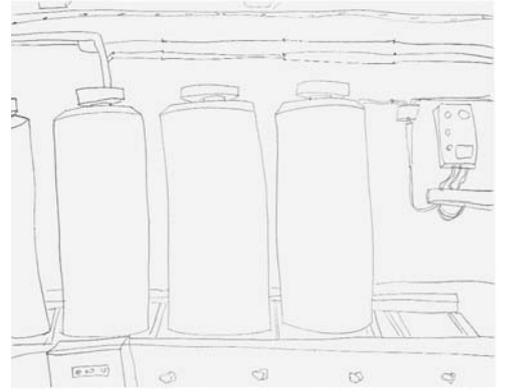
2. Februar bis 22. April 2007



Thomas Müllenbach
© 2007 Thomas Müllenbach



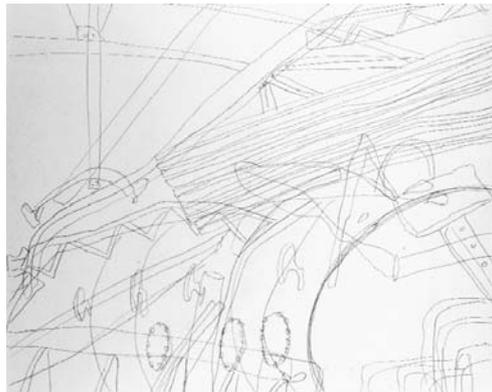
Thomas Müllenbach
Ultrahochvakuumanlage, 2006
Graphit auf Papier, 153 x 193 cm
Privatbesitz
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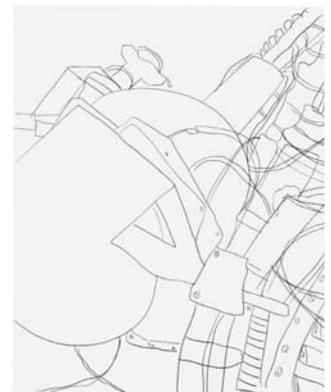
Thomas Müllenbach
Atommüll La Hague, 2006
Graphit auf Papier, 153 x 193 cm
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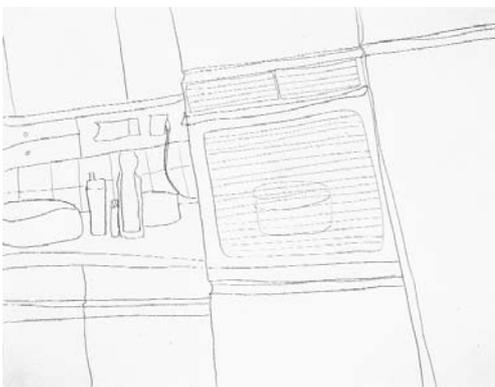
Thomas Müllenbach
Spital, 2006
Graphit auf Papier, 153 x 193 cm
Courtesy Galerie Staubkohler, Zürich
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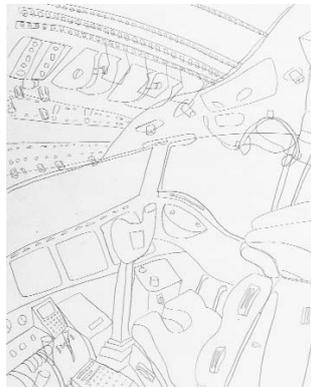
Thomas Müllenbach
Tschernobyl 1, 2006
Graphit auf Papier, 153 x 193 cm
Courtesy Galerie Staubkohler, Zürich
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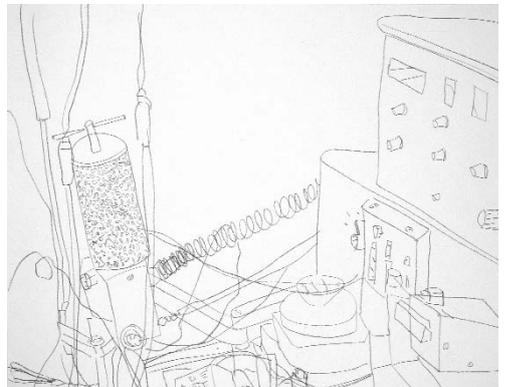
Thomas Müllenbach
Solarreaktor, 2001
Graphit auf Papier, 193 x 153 cm
Privatbesitz
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Thomas Müllenbach
Neue Küche von C. + D., 2004
Graphit auf Papier, 110 x 140 cm
Privatbesitz
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Thomas Müllenbach
MD-11 – Cockpit I, 2001
Graphit auf Papier, 193 x 153 cm
Kunsthhaus Zürich
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Thomas Müllenbach
Luftfilter, 1999
Graphit auf Papier, 153 x 193 cm
Courtesy Galerie Staubkohler, Zürich
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