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Press Release

ADRIAAN VAN DER PLOEG
>> LMIRL - LET'S MEET IN REAL LIFE
April 14 – May 26, 2007

Opening: Friday, April 13, 2007, 6 – 9 pm,

HAAS & FISCHER is delighted to present a solo exhibition of the Dutch artist, Adriaan van der Ploeg (*1984, lives and works Rotterdam).

Van der Ploeg's photo series was realized in Holland and Belgium. There the artist tracked down in the past six months Online-Game-Communities, lured young men and pubescent boys away from their computers and took pictures of them. The gamers' disconnected gaze, bloodshot eyes, chopped lips and their pale, impure skin are reproduced razor-sharp in the photographs and do not really flatter their objects. Van der Ploeg displays directly visible everyday reality without adornments and shows some of his models as caricatures of themselves. On the screen these boys transmute into muscle-bound heroes with magic powers or sometimes even into broad-breasted Amazons. The impressive photo series documents in a sensitive way a young men-dominated mass media generation. The game community, at the same time isolated and broadly online connected, constitutes its own world with its proper rules and codes.

The portraits are called after the boys' chosen names of their avatars. The most popular of these Online-Multi-Player-Games are „Call of Duty“, a World War Two game and „World of Warcraft“, a role play settled in a fantasy world in the manner of the movie „Lord of the Rings“. The game community of WoW counts about 7 Mio users worldwide. The exhibition title LMIRL is a term used in the www. As time is an important factor in the internet, skilful users like to work with acronyms in chats, forums and computer games. „Let's meet in real life“ (LMIRL) is an invitation to the acquaintances made in the virtual environment to meet in reality.

It seems obvious to link the success of Dutch contemporary photography from the last years with the great international reputation of the painting tradition of the Netherlands. On one hand there are the two most common genres, portrait and landscape, from the Dutch Golden Age, also very popular in today's photography and on the other, there is a Dutch tradition that focuses also on the direct visible, everyday reality, which the American art historian Svetlana Alpers once called the 'art of describing'. Portraits by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) and Frans Hals (1581-1666) achieve life-like quality by reproducing the way light falls on an object. Jan Vermeer (1632-1675) however is most probable to have used a Camera Obscura, a primitive form of photography, as a drawing aid. This seems the only way to explain the abundance of details in his works.

Many Dutch photographers' oeuvre revolve around changes in society and culture. Together with Rineke Dijkstra (*1959) there are others like Célia van Balen (*1965) or Koos Breukel (*1962), prominent representatives of the Dutch Golden Age of photography, who have already found their way into museums and important collections.

The opening reception will be held on Friday, April 13 from 6 – 9 pm. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday 14 – 18, Saturday, 12– 16; Sunday – Tuesday by appointment. For further information and images, please contact Zuzia Bohdanowicz at +41 (0)43 538 61 46 or zuzia@haasfischer.com.