

# DEREK ELLER GALLERY

## Hand-Drawn Maps

March 18 - April 19, 2003

Hand-Drawn Maps features the work of four artists currently living in Northern Europe: **Pauline Kraneis**, **Christian Schwarzwald**, **Rainer Kamlah** and **Jasper Sebastian Stürup**. Their drawings, as the title of this exhibition suggests, work like sets of personalized instructions. The artists are concerned with getting the viewer from point A to point B. The necessary details are all there, but only these. They mark their maps with a few landmarks here and there giving their viewer credit to fill in the blank spaces with all that falls in between.

All four artists share this economy, as well as the map drawer's no-nonsense interest in form. Once the details that are not needed have been trimmed, the important elements are portrayed with a directness that neither tries to show off nor over-stylize.

**Kamlah** latest works depict elements of a prison. The title of the full installation (composed of series of drawings and two sculptural elements) is *Just Visiting*, which underlines the voyeuristic perspective: standing outside the cell, looking in. This sense of voyeurism is heightened if one discovers that these views are all taken from prison films (who's watching the watcher). Having watched "about every prison film ever made" Kamlah sat with his camera pointed at the screen of his home monitor in search of images that stuck him. The drawings focus on blankets and towels, which are like canvases to the shadows of the institutional environment.

In **Kraneis'** drawings of car parks, carpets and airports, the element subtracted is traffic (cars, pedestrians and airplanes are absent here). It shares this trait with real maps, except that here she charts a bridge between real and imagined space. It is not any one destination that she means to point out, but rather is interested in the journey itself. In truth, one is encouraged to get lost, to let the complexities of intersections overwhelm us--be it in odd multileveled structures that defy definition of in-or-outdoors, or in the lush folds of a bedspread. Shadows are subtracted and the fields become pure pattern: pathways that are a mantra. They move us forward into a landscape where "forward" loses meaning.

**Schwarzwald's** drawings celebrate the spirit that drives many early drawing students: that impulse to explore the styles of others. In imitating forms one is attracted to, be they the works of established masters or advertising, one starts to decode those forms. It is like Braille, in that looking is suddenly a lesser tool than doing. Schwarzwald plays with this iconography of styles and forms the way travelers borrow language: concentrating on verbs and subjects and letting the rest of their sentences rely on pointing. The painterly swatches, reminiscent of Litchenstein, are often there on the walls behind the drawings, giving a context much in the way music does for lyrics. In this case, the context is, at a glance, the painterly world of art itself and, on closer examination, an art lover's attempt to trace this world; the brush strokes and their drips are not painted at all, but carefully drawn in place. This background, like the foreground, is a series of quotes, cut and paste. Schwarzwald uses these icons to direct us through his personalized history of art.

Like his contemporaries in this show, **Stürup** also uses a series of recognizable icons to lead the viewer in. In his case, the environment we're led to has the logic of those interiors that try so hard to remind us of the exterior world. Places like ski lodges or indoor pools. It is the wildness of nature brought into the ordered and safe environments of intimate architecture.

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The sexiness of organic puddle-like shapes are contradicted with man-made plaids. Whereas, the hard lines of (man-made) beds bring us back to the main-stage of sex. Sex is the most common element of the wild that we bring indoors, and though none of Stürup's drawings graphically depict sex, it is there between the lines. He draws a hand and a head of hair: these are your points A and B. "There's no need to draw the face," he says, "because you know perfectly well what that face looks like."

--D-L Alvarez (curator, Hand-Drawn Maps)

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 526 West 25th Street, 2nd floor. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 11am - 6pm. For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit [www.derekeller.com](http://www.derekeller.com).