

From the field – Aus dem Feld

The Rural College of Art  
David Gates

Wilson Chamber, Berlin /  
堇田 Shanghai

Opens April 26, 6 pm  
Exhibition April 27-28, 12-7 pm

Wilson Chamber is delighted to present its first exhibition at Mehringdamm 72: From the field – Aus dem Feld, a solo show by David Gates, representing the Rural College of Art.

David Gates (\*197X) lives and works in Essex, which also constitutes much of the Rural College of Art's studio and the focus of its field studies. The 3-day show From the Field – Aus dem Feld naturally evolved from The Rural College's first introduction into the eco-system of Berlin. Its twin show on 39 Yongjia Lu, 8,409 km eastward, concludes the post-logical conglomerate triangulation of Essex–Berlin–Shanghai. The exhibition follows in the tradition of David Gates' previous interventions in man-made structures, often but not always semi-permanent, open-air spaces and places of social interaction. Examples have included a G.P.O. telephone box, a bird-hide, a bookshop in Paris, a railway station in Essex, The Royal Mail Ltd and more recently a retrospective in a square igloo (i.e. a frozen white cube), curated by Paul Feigelfeld. Both Wilson Chamber and 堇田 are private apartments converted into temporary exhibition spaces, entrusting Gates with the task of a rural makeover and their visitors with adequate discretion.

The Rural College of Art began installing itself in pieces at Mehringdamm 72 without much ado approximately one year ago, each new object consecutively introduced by the local postman. A black and white owl, a cardboard snow leopard, then a dissected damsel in two parts, perfectly re-adjointed, once again by the local post office. Like poplar seeds in spring, the *objets envoyés* by David Gates began accumulating on the shelves, zoological specimens silently observing their addressees. A real feather and a plastic bird were taxonomically classified as a common species by a paper clip. Endowed with a fierce case of rural envy, the city dwellers of Berlin and Shanghai began hoarding these specimens of dis- and remembered nature.

Adhering to The Rural College's appreciation of twilight zones, the former maid's chamber of the Gründerzeit building at Mehringdamm 72 will be transformed into a camera lucida for the exhibition, accessible only via a wooden ladder, one visitor at a time. This Wunderkammer will house some of Gates' newest works: pinhole photography using a silver gelatin technique on bitumen on cardboard or glass. Other works in the show will include animations and collages, while the installation in the Shanghai courtyard encompasses the far-travelled images delivered by a joint venture of the Royal Mail, Deutsche Post and Hainan

Airlines.

Gates' work with pinhole photography is neither nostalgic nor self-referential in regard to its relation to the history of the medium. The photographs deny the aspect of time in terms of historicity but assert duration as a layering of incidences and chemicals. In the pinhole photographs as much as in the collages, the binary reversal of positive and negative, black and white, up and upside down, entirety and fragment act as breaking points of the images that at times fracture into versions of themselves or flip into their opposites around the margins.

In Berlin, The Rural College of Art will be also be presenting 'Signature', a scored, unfolded, double-sided lithograph edition by Andrew Curtis and David Gates (limited to 74 copies). This continues a long-standing collaboration between the two artists. Printed at the Curwen Studio, Cambridgeshire in offset litho, each print is stamped by The Rural College of Art, numbered by hand and available from Wilson Chamber and domobaal, London.

A Wilson Chamber, or Cloud Chamber, is a device that contains supersaturated vapour of water or alcohol and that is used to detect charged particles, X-rays, and gamma rays by the condensation trails that they produce. It is also the home of Paul Feigelfeld and Eva Wilson in Berlin and a space for temporary interventions of tentative nature.

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David Gates

On invitation by Paul Feigelfeld and Eva Wilson  
Courtesy of domobaal, London

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Wilson Chamber  
Mehringdamm 72, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
10961 Berlin  
eva.wilson@this-is.org

董田  
Shanghai  
00000@blicero.org