

YOSSI MILO GALLERY



For Immediate Release:

SIMEN JOHAN
Breeding Ground
October 16 - December 6, 2003

Yossi Milo Gallery is pleased to present *Breeding Ground*, an exhibition of new large scale color photographs by Simen Johan. The exhibition opens on Thursday, October 16 and closes on Saturday, December 6, with a reception for the artist on Thursday, October 16 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Simen Johan continues his ongoing series of narrative pictorials exploring the psychological complexities of childhood. Johan's last series *Evidence of Things Unseen (2001)* portrayed uncommonly imaginative and determined children whose actions and play, which occurred primarily at night and in solitude, appeared purposeful as if on a particular mission or quest. The images echoed fundamental human impulses, including those that are artistic or religious.

Breeding Ground continues this theme, only this time the children are excluded. Johan creates elaborate childlike constructions of familiar elements including toys, food, clothes, glitter, animals and things from nature that he places into the interiors of abandoned buildings or desolate places in nature. The new images bring into being strange playgrounds or secret hideouts where whimsical experiments or perhaps rituals from an imaginary religion have taken place. Fairytale-like worlds emerge where the creativity of imaginary children reflects upon the perplexity of the real world.

The artist photographed much of the material for his new series in the countryside of Scandinavia and Austria; in abandoned homes, churches and buildings that he found while driving cross-country through the United States; and at a recent residency at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. Some of the animals and creations were photographed in the studio or other locations and then later digitally inserted into the settings. Other images, unlike most of Johan's past work, were created as final installations at the actual locations, or as complete sets built in the studio, and were therefore not digitally composed.

Simen Johan's first monograph *Room to Play*, was published in February 2003 by Twin Palms Publishers. His work is in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts - Houston, and Denver Art Museum among others. Johan's work has been exhibited and published extensively in the United States, Europe, and New Zealand. Recent 2003 exhibitions include solo shows at Hordaland Kunst Senter in Bergen, Norway and Rogaland Kunst Senter in Stavanger, Norway, as well as group shows at the International Center for Photography, New York and Centro de Arte de Salamanca, Spain. In 2001, he received the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship. He received a BFA in photography from the School of Visual Arts, NYC in 1995 and a film and video degree from Lugnetskolan, Sweden in 1992. Simen Johan was born in Kirkenes, Norway in 1973, was raised in Sweden, and has resided in New York City since 1992.

For more information, please contact Alissa Schoenfeld at 212.414.0370 or visit the gallery's web site at www.yossimilo.com.