

Press Release

Mathias Müller

"As If My Bones Had Turned To Water" *Sleepy Haven*, 1993

January 9 – February 12, 2005

Thomas Erben is pleased to present *Sleepy Haven* (1993), a film by the acclaimed German media artist Matthias Müller. His work was last seen in New York as a stand-out contribution to the International Center of Photography's 2004 Triennial. No stranger to the local audience, The Museum of Modern Art dedicated a retrospective to him in 1994.

A somnambulistic reverie of sailors adrift in the tumultuously abstract sea of teeming emotion and sexual attraction, *Sleepy Haven* ingeniously pieces together original as well as appropriated footage. Simultaneously inspired by maritime novels of the late 19th century and by the imagery of avant-garde film landmarks such as *Fireworks* (Kenneth Anger, 1947) and *Un Chant D'Amour* (Jean Genet, 1950), the film allows its acoustic and visual material to submerge, dissolve, and conceal.

In Müller's recently published monograph, Mark Gisbourne describes the techniques used (fast cutting, fade in and fade out, the use of a blue tinted, sometimes solarized, b&w film surface, and bathtub processing) as materialized metaphors of bodily and human affect realized as pure celluloid transcription - a work which is visually palpable with an immediate feeling for the sensuous moment. It is further distinguished by a great aesthetic unity and an intense rhythm.

The result is a film which in and of itself becomes pure sex, embodying all the longing, desire, ultimate release and affecting tearing apart thereof, while eschewing the actual act.

Born in 1961, Müller received his MFA at the HBK Braunschweig and is currently a Professor of Experimental Film at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. His work has received highly-regarded awards within the circuits of international film festivals including the **Preis der Deutschen Filmkritik** (1991, 1997, 2000) and the Main Award at the **Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen** (1999). Since his inclusion in **Manifesta 3**, Ljubljana (2000) his work has been increasingly visible within the context of contemporary art. He has been included in exhibitons at such esteemed institutions as **Centre Georges Pompidou**, **Tate Modern**, and **Palais de Tokyo**, Paris. He is also represented by galleries in the UK, Germany, and Spain.