

PRESS RELEASE**Clare Strand. Photographs and Video**

7/2 – 5/4/2009

Museum Folkwang, Kahrstrasse 16, 45128 Essen, Germany

Press Conference: Friday, 6 February, 2009, 11 a.m. The artist will be present**Opening:** Friday, 6 February, 2009, 7 p.m.

The Photographic Collection of the Museum Folkwang is showing the first individual exhibition by the British photographer Clare Strand (b. 1973 in Surrey) from 7/2 to 5/4/2009 in the Old Building of the Museum Folkwang. Strand's fascination with crime stories, scenes of horror and paranormal phenomena forms the basis for her work. In numerous photographic genres, from 19th century studio photography to police forensic photography, she develops her often mysterious and eerie work. The Museum Folkwang is presenting altogether 6 series from the last 10 years.

Clare Strand photographs herself or finds and collects others' photographs which she then uses for one of her thematically defined works. For her changing themes she uses different photographic methods with which she especially reflects on the relation of artistic usage to applied practice in photography. In the thematically arranged groups of works, she particularly raises the question of the status of individual images and series.

On show in the Museum Folkwang exhibition will be, among others, the two-part series *Gone Astray (Portraits and Details)*, the title of which is taken from Charles Dickens' "Household Words". In the first part of the work town-dwellers are posed in front of a painted nature backdrop that recalls the 19th century. The second part consists of eight night shots. Each photograph shows mysterious scene presented by Clare Strand or her partner. To the entire series are assigned texts – of two or four lines. These passages allow the viewer to relate to the photograph. However, Strand places image and text, reading and looking as levels of perception next to one another, without linking the two. The work illustrates the photographer's preference for the uncertainty and ambiguity of photographic images. Each image of this series promotes different associations and suppositions. It is not one story which is told; rather, many are imaginable.

The work *Signs of a Struggle* was made as part of a contract work for the 50th anniversary of the "New Towns". The "New Town" project, planned and promoted by the state, began at the end of the 1940's with the intention of reducing strain on existing urban centers and to create regional structures. Clare Strand takes up the idea of the theater director Eugene Ionesco of the perfect city with only one problem – that it contains a serial killer who cannot be captured. This eerie idea seems to Strand to be a utopia of the New Towns and for her the possibility of presenting photographically the relation between document and fiction. Strand takes on the role of an investigator, who searches archives, photographs and manipulates. For the viewer, the origins and making of the photographs are not appreciable.

The somewhat yellowed cardboard used for the prints imply age, the photographs themselves suggest crime scenes. In this work, too, the artist uses texts, "New Town Tales" which have been assigned to the images in exchangeable order and which allow the viewer to make attributions which go beyond the level of the image.

The exhibition also shows the series *Photism, Kirlian* and *Conjurations*.

Accompanying the exhibition is a book with an essay by Ute Eskildsen, an interview by Chris Mullen of Clare Strand and an introduction by David Chandler.

The exhibition is supported by the British Council.

Public tours: Current dates in the Internet

Events: Current dates in the Internet

Downloadable materials at: <http://www.museum-folkwang.de/de/meta/presse.html>

General Visitor Information

Tel. +49(0) 201 – 88 45 301

Fax. +49 (0) 201 – 88 45 330

info@museum-folkwang.essen.de

www.museum-folkwang.de

Opening Hours: Tue-Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Tickets: 5.00/3.50 Euro

The 2009 program of the Museum Folkwang on Kahrstrasse ends with this exhibition on 5 April. In January 2010, when Essen and the Ruhr Area is the Cultural Capital of Europe, the new building by David Chipperfield Architects, financed by the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung, will be inaugurated.

Presseabteilung

Friedrichstrasse 12 D- 45128 Essen Fon +49(0)201-8845-160 e-mail presse@museum-folkwang.essen.de