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MICHEL AUDER
SECRET SHARER

September 25 - October 26, 2003
Opening Reception, Thursday, September 25, 2003, 7-9pm
Gallery hours: Wednesday-Sunday, 12-7pm

PARTICIPANT INC is pleased to open its second season with *Secret Sharer*, a solo exhibition of photographs and videos by Michel Auder. Auder is exhibiting two bodies of recent photographic works, *188 Orchard Street* (2001) and his ongoing series, *Details*. The exhibition premieres new videotapes including *Fun and Fire*, *Apocalypse Later* and *Aprés Nous le Deluge (After Us, Deluge)*, among others made in 2003. Following his recent retrospectives of film and video works (1969-2003) at Anthology Film Archives, New York in June 2003 and at The Renaissance Society, Chicago in March 2002, *Secret Sharer* presents new projects, shown in New York for the first time.

Auder's photographic work relies on an editing practice very close to his work in video: rigorous editing from extensive volumes of material. The photographs that comprise *188 Orchard Street* were meticulously culled from forty hours of surveillance video shot by Auder in his Orchard Street studio over a year (June 1999-March 2000). Auder's recurrent blue-gray palette, together with the grain of video image, here, in serialized still form, establishes a mood of dreamlike obscurity. His illusory *Details* are conscientiously rendered minutiae, anthologized fragments from pornography websites mingled with images drawn from his own video footage. As if he has become indifferent toward the central action, Auder looks to the peripheries, bringing into focus lush yet mundane details of décor and surface texture. Together with his new videos that arrive from an archive of spontaneous footage (all shot in 2000-03), *Secret Sharer* manifests an in-depth look at Auder's most current projects.

In Auder's early feature film, *Cleopatra* (1970), the queen's zoo is an animal enthusiast's room at the Chelsea Hotel, the desert is made of snow, and characters speed by on snowmobiles. Filmed on 16mm and operatic in scale, this version of the Cleopatra story is also recklessly idiosyncratic, and foreshadows Auder's subsequent three decades of art-making in its casting and staging of dramas from his lived experience. In color and texture, his photographic series, *Details*, returns to his early interest in the opulence of the mundane.

Auder's other film, *Keeping Busy* (1969), directly responds to Andy Warhol's distilled film ennui by positing this presumed home movie as a worthy pastime for superstars on holiday. Occupying a similar dark gray haze, the occupants of *188 Orchard Street* dramatize an autobiographical non-narrative of languid encounters. In their immediacy, his new videos emphasize the function of his work to date--to keep busy. They provide a means to structure otherwise uncomposed moments of Auder's life, both in relation to others and alone.

Internalizing the filmic influences of his early contemporaries, ranging from the reductivist tendencies of Warhol to the naturalistic, intimate style of Frederick Wiseman and Robert Frank, Auder developed a unique signature that fluctuates between closeness and distance, positioning himself as both insider and outlaw. Auder perhaps wanted it both ways in his movies, and found this possibility in the medium of video, a newly developing art form in the late 60s-70s. He could record everything around him, maybe use it later. It provided a way of being in a situation, intimately involved with his ensemble, as well as remaining outside, an observer more closely affiliated with the viewer.

Auder's inadvertently indexical *Chronicles*, for example, reside conceptually somewhere between Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* and Nan Goldin's *Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. A massive body of unedited video, this archive is the source material

from which he culls numerous finished works. Casting doubt on the distinctions between anonymity and intimacy, staged and spontaneous performance, the footage constitutes an unfolding family portrait, travel log, and diary. Often unselfconsciously recorded and stored, the *Chronicles* necessarily change with time. And as time passes, certain people are revisited, years later, or old footage is re-edited to tell different stories.

Some of Auder's recent video works emerge from these disparate temporal sources and incorporate video letters and his own narration of various scenes--in general, more of Auder in front of the camera, situating himself, reflectively, in the present. His works on view in *Secret Sharer* are comprised mainly of new footage, rely heavily on digital technologies, and respond to the increased anonymity of the Internet. Uncharacteristically short in duration, the new tapes chart Auder's observations of strange and at times morbid habits--stringing together seemingly unrelated footage to register a cosmic grief not unlike Gualtiero Jacopetti's 1963 *Mondo Cane (It's a Dog's World)*, to which he refers.

While interacting with others through his work is not unusual for Auder, his new videos explore an artist left to his own devices. His strange methods of communication are refined in works that implicate the artist more explicitly in intimate scenarios. Encompassing the complex range of methodologies that characterize Auder's work to date, *Secret Sharer* discloses an unwavering acceptance of the potential of art to conspire with life in unanticipated ways.

Michel Auder lives and works in Brooklyn. He has screened and exhibited his work extensively, nationally and internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include *Intimate Stranger* at Anthology Film Archives, New York; and retrospectives at The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago and Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmo, Sweden. He will exhibit at the Williams College Museum this spring.

For more information, please visit www.michelauder.com.

A video library of over thirty of Auder's works will be available for viewing during gallery hours.

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 95 Rivington Street,
between Ludlow and Orchard Streets in the Lower East Side.

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