

something new. For instance, in one work here he has taken several old fashioned folding rulers and made them into a model house.

## GALLERY 5

Hans-Peter Feldmann started collecting when he was a child growing up in West Germany and many of the works in this exhibition have a sense of child-like fun about them. The single work in this gallery is very simple; a model train has been left running in circles on an enormous patterned rug. This domestic scene may bring to mind childhood memories of playing with toys on the floor. However, the vast emptiness of the rug and the endless repetition of the moving train suggest a more melancholy, or even uncanny atmosphere. Like the rest of the work in this exhibition, Feldmann presents the familiar in an unfamiliar way, and in doing so creates an oddly affecting scene.

*This guide is intended as an introduction to the exhibition. Please ask a Steward if you have any questions.*

*There is more information about Hans Peter Feldmann's work in the Reading Room on the Second Floor which is open every day 12.00 - 6.00pm.*

*A catalogue is available in Arnolfini Bookshop price £19.99.*

*Art/Fun, an activity pack for this exhibition, is available from Arnolfini Bookshop price £1.*

*A conversation between Hans Peter Feldmann and the exhibition's curator Martin Clark can be downloaded from Arnolfini's website from 1 December.*

## Introduction to the exhibition

### Hans Peter Feldmann

**24 November 2007 - 20 January 2008**

**Galleries 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5**

Hans-Peter Feldmann is an avid collector of images and objects. From found photographs to kitschy knick-knacks and other ephemera, he sorts through and chooses to keep what others might dismiss or ignore. He cuts images from newspapers and popular magazines and uses postcards found at flea markets. Family photographs, holiday snaps, underwear adverts, pinups, photo albums and many other items form an enormous personal archive of material from which Feldmann makes his art.

Throughout his career Feldmann has sought to reveal often overlooked aspects of ordinary and everyday images and objects. Although his work has its roots in Conceptual Art, which has a reputation for being complicated or hard to understand, Feldmann

doesn't take himself or the art world too seriously. He encourages viewers to approach his work in their own way, enjoying it simply for what it is.

The artist's wish that people think freely about the work extends to his leaving of much of the work untitled.

## GALLERY 1

**SCHATTENSPIEL (SHADOW PLAY)**, is an assortment of toy figures and bric-a-brac arranged on slowly revolving turntables. Light shining onto the objects causes shadows to be cast onto the gallery walls, creating a kind of performance or dance. The work has strong associations with the ancient art of shadow puppetry, while also referencing the roots of photography and cinema.

By evoking a child-like sense of wonderment, Feldmann encourages viewers to see simple, everyday things in a new way. The image of the moon in this gallery is Feldmann's enlarged photograph of a picture he found and suggests an alternative light source for the shadows. The gentle breeze of a nearby fan adds more movement within the space and also to the enchanting atmosphere in the gallery.

## GALLERY 2

Feldmann often uses the people around him as subjects for his photographs. His photographic installation **100 YEARS** explores the human ageing process with 101 portraits of his friends and family. The photographs are hung in order of age, each capturing a different person, from eight weeks to 100 years old. Each photograph depicts an individual in their own environment and can be looked at individually, as small groups or as one collection. In each case, they reveal something of what it is to be human.

The style of this work shows the influence of another German photographer August Sander (1876 – 1964), who was well known for his portraits of everyday people. Like the people in **100 YEARS**, Sander often posed his subjects so that they were looking right at the camera, giving them a direct relationship with the viewer. Similarly, Feldmann is careful to allow his subjects individuality and dignity but leaves the viewer to imagine each one's story and the connections between them.

The flowers in this gallery introduce a splash of colour but are also associated with anniversaries, weddings, births and deaths – occasions both happy and sad that occur throughout a human life.

## GALLERY 3

Books are very important to Hans-Peter Feldmann. He has a large collection and also makes his own books containing found images (some of these are on display in the **READING ROOM** on the second floor).

**BOOKCASE** is a near life-size photograph of Feldmann's own bookshelves in his home. Much of his work is often about looking at other people's lives through photographs and here he gives a glimpse into his own life. Some of the books may be familiar to many, others are specialist and obscure.

Next to this are two hand-painted plaster reproductions of classical sculptures, **DAVID** and **VENUS**. Feldmann has painted them using garish, artificial colours that suggest something cheap and tacky or kitsch. Originally they were Feldmann's attempt to make an unacceptable artwork in order to avoid exhibiting. Feldmann had been asked to make an exhibition of his work at a time when he was trying to withdraw from the artworld. Ironically, they have become one of his most popular object series.

Exaggerated colour is also a feature of Feldmann's **FLOWER** series, which are photographs of flowers that he has

taken himself. The flowers are at once beautiful and banal. Feldmann is often drawn to particular kinds of images or deliberately seeks out pictures of certain things. He is fascinated with the particularities and qualities of certain old photographs; for instance, their over-saturated colours that evoke a feeling of nostalgia. Feldmann's flower photographs attempt to recreate this look, while revealing his love for the photographic process.

On the other side of the diagonal wall are Feldmann's **WUNDERKAMMER**, or cabinets of curiosities. Objects can take on different meanings according to the context in which they are placed. These cabinets are filled with all manner of everyday objects taken from the artist's vast collection. Matches, binoculars, a razor and a Rubik's Cube sit alongside numerous other items, presented like a museum display.

Inspiration for this work came after Feldmann visited an ethnographic museum where he saw similar looking cases filled with everyday items from ancient South American societies. Museum displays usually present unfamiliar items from other times or cultures. By using these cheap, mass produced objects, familiar to most of us, Feldmann turns the tables on himself and the viewer. Can we look at our ourselves and our everyday lives as we might examine others?

In a similar way to his collecting of objects and images, Feldmann often photographs things around him

that catch his eye. His **CLOUD** works are photographs of different cloud formations. What may appear in nature as unremarkable or insignificant can, when framed as art, be viewed completely differently. Photography enables Feldmann to capture temporary, shifting things and in doing so draw attention to the beauty found in the everyday and the mundane.

Adjacent to these, **WALL OF IMAGES** presents a selection of photocopied images from Feldmann's vast archive. They are grouped together by type or by subject matter. He is as much interested in the specific attributes of the individual images, such as colouratio or creases, as in their content. His use of borrowed images and objects that are familiar from everyday life encourages viewers to explore their own associations and responses to them.

## GALLERY 4

**REMINDER OF MY TIME AS A WAITER** is a simple but witty sculpture; a chair has been placed upside down on a plinth. It resembles the way in which chairs are placed onto the tables of a pub or restaurant at the end of an evening after the customers have left. Is the plinth part of the artwork, perhaps representing a table, or is it just a way of displaying it? Once again, Feldmann's fascination with the everyday is revealed.

As with much of Feldmann's work, many pieces in this gallery use everyday objects, transforming them into