



Teachers Pack

Beate Gütschow R/LS

24 February – 8 April 2007

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SWAY PARISH COUNCIL



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Exhibition Information for Teachers

R/LS is the title of the first British exhibition by Beate Gütschow, an internationally renowned young German artist who has previously exhibited widely in Europe and the USA. Gütschow is one of a number of exciting photography and video artists emerging from Berlin, and was artist in residence at ArtSway in Autumn 2006 in partnership with the Goethe-Institut, London: an international organisation that promotes knowledge of German art and culture.

LS

In ArtSway's main Gallery there is a selection from Beate Gütschow's LS series: large photographic prints of pastoral landscapes (please see the images section of this pack for more details). The LS photographs have a sense of the familiar to them, though it is impossible to recognise the individual scenes themselves. The images and their scale and composition are reminiscent of the large paintings of the 17th and 18th Centuries, by artists such as Claude Lorraine (1600 - 1682), Thomas Gainsborough (1727 - 1888) and Jacob van Ruisdael (1628 - 1682). In the painting of this period the landscape was constructed with a foreground, middle and background, to give the viewer a sense of perspective as though they were entering the landscape and Gütschow has carefully transposed these conventions onto her photographic work.

The landscapes represented in these photographs, however, cannot be found in nature, as they are digital collages, comprised of multiple elements. Gütschow photographed several individual features and figures and recreated the idyllic scenes using digital montage. The painters to which her work refers are known to have done the same thing: to construct and idealise nature in order to create a utopian scene that is complete, designed and intended for a viewer. The word landscape itself (from the Dutch word *landschap*) was used to refer to painting decades before it is used to refer to nature, suggesting that viewers became accustomed to landscapes through painting before finding them in nature. In the period to which Gütschow refers - before the advent of photography - artists were free to design and order the landscape as they desired, and so create the concept of an ideal landscape. As Gütschow explains: "Landscape (nature) never looked like this. In my work ideal means not to exclude the ugliness, it means to construct reality."

R#1 & R#2

In ArtSway's Gallery 3 are Beate Gütschow's new video works, the diptych entitled R#1 and R#2, that were filmed and developed while she was artist in residence at ArtSway in Autumn 2006. These works mark a development from the LS series: Gütschow has extended her practice to video, and has chosen work with two specific paintings. R#1 & R#2 refer to two canvases by Jacob van Ruisdael - both entitled *The Jewish Cemetery* (painted in 1654 and 1655). Ruisdael's paintings include real tombs, taken from the Jewish Cemetery at Ouderkerk near Amsterdam, but the surrounding landscape in these paintings was fabricated by Ruisdael, and included elements such as a ruined castle from Bad Bentheim in Germany, a fictitious river and hills. These two paintings draw attention to the way that the landscape is often constructed to convey a particular message. *The Jewish Cemetery* paintings are widely recognised to be Ruisdael's most allegorical works: a dead tree, struck by lightning, that seems to point to the heavens is placed next to a lush healthy tree, the ruins and graves, rushing streams and a gloomy and portentous atmosphere all point

to the transience of life on earth, and were designed to provoke religious or sublime contemplation.

In response to these paintings Gütschow located the actual cemetery, and filmed footage of the three tombs, which remain to this day. Filming in the New Forest and South of England, she then sourced individual features of the landscape similar to those found in Ruisdael's paintings to recreate a close approximation of *The Jewish Cemetery* paintings. Each video is a montage of 10 - 15 individual films, digitally pasted to create a single image. The results are eerie, melancholic video works that reference the original paintings via the unflinching gaze of the video camera lens.

About Beate Gütschow

Beate Gütschow was born in Mainz, Germany in 1970 and now lives in Berlin. She studied at Hochschule für bildende Kunst, Hamburg with Bernhard Johannes Blume and Wolfgang Tillmans, experimenting with painting and video as well as photography. Gütschow was awarded the Ars Viva Prize in 2006 and her next exhibition is at the Contemporary Museum of Photography, Chicago, in Autumn 2007.

Beate Gütschow was selected from a group of artists nominated by German curators and artists for a residency at ArtSway in September and October 2006. During the residency ArtSway and the Goethe-Institut in London provided mentoring and practical support towards the development of *R#1* and *R#2*, which are simultaneously exhibited at the Goethe-Institut, London, from 15 February - 8 April 2007.

Images from Beate Gütschow: R/LS



Beate Gütschow, *LS10*, photograph, 2001



Beate Gütschow, *LS11*, photograph, 2001



Beate Gütschow, *LS13*, photograph, 2001



Beate Gütschow, *LS17*, photograph, 2001



Beate Gütschow, *R1*, video, 2007



Beate Gütschow, *R2*, video, 2007

Themes for Lessons and Workshops

As described in the **Exhibition Information for Teachers** part of this booklet Beate Gütschow's work contains varied themes and ideas – many of which could be adapted for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum for Art, as well as that linked to Natural History and research techniques at home and abroad.

Themes and Ideas to consider for Lessons:

- **Playing With Nature**
- **Research Overseas/ Close to Home**
- **Collage: Use of New Technology**
- **Manipulating Reality**

Playing With Nature

Beate Gütschow's photographs and videos are inspired by and based upon similar techniques as those used by painters in the 17th and 18th Centuries. The aim at that time was to present an idealised version of nature, and the natural world – to very much play with nature (as can be seen in the paintings of Jacob van Ruisdael).

Gütschow's photographs and videos intentionally play upon this idealisation and manipulation of nature, whilst at the same time questioning the validity of contemporary photography. In her works, the artist is showing the viewer how easy it is to manipulate the world around us using simple collage techniques that can be adapted to both painting and photography.

Research Overseas/ Close to Home

Much of Gütschow's work is made possible by her exhaustive research trips. These trips have seen her travel to the actual Jewish cemetery that Ruisdael himself painted in the mid 17th Century, to film it in its present state just outside of Amsterdam in Holland. Whilst at ArtSway, Gütschow spent much of her residency exploring the New Forest and many parts of Dorset and Hampshire to find suitable imagery for her two finished films. This is something she has done for many years for her photographs – and to find the perfect imagery for her work Gütschow had to research significant places on the Internet, as well as actually visiting numerous places in person.

Collage: Use of New Technology

On first looking at Beate Gütschow's photographs and videos, one could be forgiven for thinking that they were simply one image. However, her photographs are all constructed from between 50 and 60 individual photographs. All of the many images that go into making the one final image are taken by Gütschow herself – from her native German and many other parts of the world. She then painstakingly collages together all of her source material to produce one final image that reflects her source material of 17th and 18th Century paintings.

For her residency and subsequent exhibition at ArtSway Gütschow decided to push her work to new areas by making a film collage based on two Jacob von Ruisdael canvases. To do this she needed to use hi-definition cameras, and software such as

Final Cut Pro – which enabled her to stitch together the many source images she filmed in and around the New Forest for her finished film.

Manipulating Reality

Perhaps the most intriguing element of Gütschow's work – and that of many other contemporary visual artists – is her willingness to play with ideas of truth and fiction – or what the viewer believes is a realistic and fake image.

One of Gütschow's main aims is to produce a final photograph or film that convinces the viewer that what they are seeing is real and untouched by computer trickery. This deliberate manipulation of how the viewer reacts to her photographs means that Gütschow is able to draw them into her work – expanding their experiences, and prompting the viewer to question the validity of other photographs.

Guided Tours and Workshops at ArtSway

ArtSway is always keen to welcome school groups visiting the gallery. Please see the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet for more information. **Please note:** we would only be able to accommodate between 20 and 25 children in the galleries per visit.

Guided Tours

One of the best ways to experience an artist's work, as opposed to looking at images in books and on the Internet, is to actually visit a gallery to see their work in the flesh. ArtSway has hosted many school group visits in the past, offering **Guided Tours** around the gallery by the Exhibition and Education Officer and Audience Development Officer.

The tours sometimes involve power point presentations, but usually consist of ArtSway's Officers taking the students from work to work, explaining the origins and content of the works on display. A tour will usually end with a question and answer session.

On some occasions it may be possible to have the artists present for a school visit.

Workshops

ArtSway employs a wide range of artists to lead workshops. However, they are all professional artists who will charge a fee to lead a workshop. If a school is interested in scheduling an artist to lead a workshop, please contact the gallery. Contact details are in the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet. In some instances we will provide an artist free of charge.

There are a series of one-hour workshops available; taking place after the tour of the exhibition that will be lead by ArtSway's Exhibitions and Education Officer. These workshops, that will involve simple drawing and paintings techniques, will be based on the themes outlined in the **Themes for Lessons and Workshops** section of this booklet.

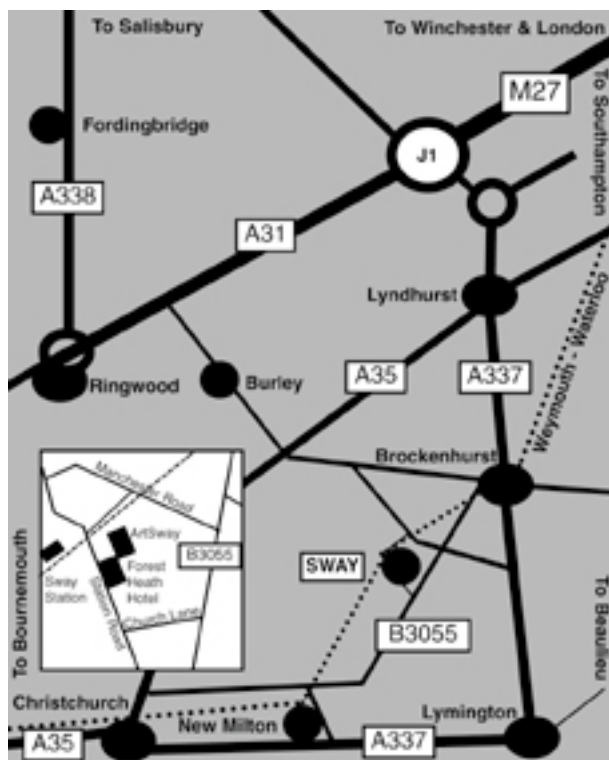
A Timetable of a Typical School Visit to ArtSway

- 10.00am – 10.10am: **Introduction and welcome to ArtSway.**
- 10.10am – 10.30am: **Tour of the exhibition.**
- 10.30am – 11.30am: **Workshop activities.**
- 11.30am – 11.45am: **Discussion and round up of activities.**
- 12.00pm: **End of workshops and school visit.**

Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway

The following is information for school groups visiting ArtSway for **Guided Tours and Workshops**.

Getting to ArtSway:



By Rail: Sway Station is on the London Waterloo to Weymouth Line.

By Car: Follow signs to Sway from Brockenhurst, Burley or Lymington, then follow signs for Village Centre & Train Station. ArtSway is just behind the Forest Heath Hotel on Station Road.

Access: All parts of the gallery are accessible via level access.

Parking: ArtSway has its own car park that is reached along the access drive between the surgery and chemist on Station Road in the centre of Sway.

In the Galleries

Works of art, especially those by Beate Gütschow, are very fragile and cannot be touched. We ask that children visiting the gallery take care both of their own safety and of the artworks on display. Teachers and their assistants are responsible for their groups. At the beginning of the tour the relevant ArtSway Officer will give a brief explanation to the visiting children of what they can and cannot do in the gallery.

Contact Details for ArtSway

If you would like to discuss a visit to ArtSway, or what we could offer in terms of educational resources, please contact:

Exhibitions and Education Officer Peter Bonnell on Telephone: 01590 682260 (extension 14), or Email: peter@artsway.org.uk

Address: ArtSway, Station Road, Sway, Hampshire, SO41 6BA

Telephone: 01590 682260 **Fax:** 01590 681989

Email: mail@artsway.org.uk **Web:** www.artsway.org.uk

Opening Times: Tuesday to Sunday, 11am – 5pm. **Admission is FREE.**