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Daniel Breu Pencil on paper

19 August to 18 October 2015
Opening: Tuesday, 18 August 2015, 6 p.m.

Bern-based artist Daniel Breu (*1963) has devoted himself to drawing since 1989. His experimental quest for aesthetic formulations of the figurative has produced a broad spectrum of portrayals that explore the rich potential of representation, as well as its limitations. The actual process of drawing, for Breu, is far from the spontaneous sketch or swiftly expressed idea. Instead, for him, pencil drawing involves a process of meticulous planning and execution, usually resulting in entire cycles of works. His approach is a highly distinctive one that in many respects contrasts sharply with, and even undermines, the conventional notion of drawing as a fleeting exercise in spontaneity. His personal authorship always remains in the background, and is secondary to the representation of the subject matter itself.

Daniel Breu chooses his motifs in a variety of ways. In addition to situations and objects captured in photographs, visual impressions of other artworks often form the basis for his close examination of a theme. For instance, his extensive series of works portraying wire fences was inspired by Fabrice Gygi's large-format 2002 linocut *Treillis*, while another series whimsically paraphrased a *dans macabre* by Hans Holbein the Younger dating from 1524-1525.

More recently, the artist has been exploring ways of rendering prescribed forms – such as broken panes of glass – indirectly, almost casually, by tracing them in pencil. Moraines and rocky landscapes formed by glaciers seem to be mirrored as though coincidentally in his works. In his approach to these forms and formations, Daniel Breu proves himself to be a subtle director who never pushes his authorship to the fore. It is this authorial restraint in applying any personal trace that is the hallmark of his work.

This exhibition is the first to provide a comprehensive insight into the oeuvre of Daniel Breu, whose diverse and compelling work has, until now, had little exposure to a wider audience.

For further information and visual material:
Dr. Michael Matile, curator of the exhibition, Tel. 044/632 78 75 or matile@gs.ethz.ch

A catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition:
Daniel Breu. *Graphit auf Papier* (in German), with a text by Michael Matile, Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2015; approx. 80 pages and 93 illustrations, CHF 24.-, ISBN 978-3-7319-0264-5