

POSTMASTERS

postmasters 459 w 19 street nyc 10011 212 727 3323

fax 212 229 2829

postmasters@thing.net

for immediate release:

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GUY BEN-NER

"Treehouse Kit" and "Berkeley's Island"

opening reception: Saturday, April 15, 6-8 pm

Postmasters Gallery is pleased to present second solo exhibition in New York by Israeli artist Guy Ben-Ner. The show will include two works: *"Treehouse Kit"* - sculpture and video installation originally commissioned for the Israeli Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale 2005, and *"Berkeley's Island"* (1999), the very first video that set the parameters of his unique do-it yourself "home movies". *"Berkeley's Island"* has never been shown in the US.

Low-tech, but ingeniously inventive Ben-Ner videos center around home and family, exploring, exposing and exploiting the relationship he has with his children. Simultaneously serious and funny, tender and torturous, they resonate with and built on history of cinema. Guy Ben-Ner is best known for his video *"Moby Dick"* (2000) - a silent slapstick conceptual comedy in which he reenacted the famous novel in his kitchen with his six years old daughter. His subsequent works *"Elia - A Story of an Ostrich Chick"* (2003) and *"Wild Boy"* (2004) also featured the artist and his children.

In the two works in the current show the family looms large, but the children and wife are mostly absent from the frame. Robinson Crusoe is an anchor of both narratives. Ben-Ner is alone, acts alone - isolation, dislocation and self reliance show the flip side of love, security and interdependence that defines family life.

"Treehouse Kit" consists of a large wooden tree created from recombined, generic furniture (chairs, table, bed etc.). The sculpture is presented along with an instructional style video in which Ben-Ner (in swim trunks and a huge beard, a cross between Robinson Crusoe and an archetypical Israeli settler) converts the pre-fab tree back into a rudimentary home.

In *"Berkeley's Island"*, the first video to address his position of "domestic artist," Guy Ben-Ner placed a small sandy island complete with a palm tree in the middle of the kitchen and became a shipwreck survivor living in solitude amidst domestic life going on around him. Through existential introspection combined with often hilarious use of resources that the kitchen set provides ("I learned to use what the island supplied me with"), *"Berkeley's Island"* depicts the home environment as an exile and simultaneously as a place to escape from.

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Postmasters Gallery, located in Chelsea at 459 West 19th Street (corner of 10th Avenue), is open Tuesday through Saturday to 11 - 6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon at 212-727-3323 with any questions or image requests.

www.postmastersart.com

e-mail: postmasters@thing.net