

The Nicola Trussardi Foundation presents:  
**MEECHFIEBER**  
a project by JOHN BOCK  
Sala Reale, Stazione Centrale – Milan  
November 9th – December 5th, 2004

**FONDAZIONE  
NICOLA  
TRUSSARDI**

In the Royal Room of the Central Station (Sala Reale, Stazione Centrale) in Milan, the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi presents MEECHFIEBER, German artist John Bock's new film, from November 9th through December 5th 2004.

Animated by a kaleidoscopic profusion of objects, materials, fabrics and bizarre coloured prosthetics, John Bock's films and videos take their first inspiration from reality, altering it through magnification or deformation. The elements and ideas composing our daily life become an endless parade of clowns, puppets, circus animals and acrobats. MEECHFIEBER is a fantasy dictionary of the different personas populating the absurd and surreal world of John Bock, one of the most interesting characters of today's German art scene. Set in the rural atmosphere of Gribbohm farm, where John Bock was born and raised, MEECHFIEBER is a grotesque movie in which two farm workers tend to hypertrophic machines, bric-a-brac spaceships and animals in costumes playing a bizarre series of roles.

Featuring two professional actors, Anne Tismer and Lars Rudolph, the latter seen in *Run Lola Run* (1999), MEECHFIEBER is John Bock's first real movie: a slapstick comedy and imaginary trip inside John Bock's displaced and surreal personal micro-world, MEECHFIEBER is a co-production between the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi and the Carnegie International 2004-05 in Pittsburgh.

This will be John Bock's first solo show in an Italian institution. Along with the screening of MEECHFIEBER, John Bock — half mad scientist, half Buster Keaton — has decided to present a personal selection of his video works. In GAST a hare scuttles around a sitting room between furniture, carpet, armchairs and carrots; in BOXER two clowns wrestle in an improvised ring wearing masks, colourful costumes, and edible limbs; in ALICE COOPER the artist, disguised as a rock star, dances as if in a crowded gig; TRAIL OF DEUTSCHE BANK features a sped up fight between the artist and a lawnmower; and in A GENTLEMAN WORKS WHEN A GENTLEMAN WORKS A WORK, Bock and two puppets reveal today's uncanny secrets, mixing up different languages and ideas.

The exhibition at the Royal Room of the Central Station is not a retrospective, but rather an introspective look inside the bizarre dreams of John Bock — a stroll beyond Alice's mirror.

John Bock was born in Gribbohm in 1965. He lives and works in Berlin. He has had solo exhibitions in a number of international institutions including MoMA, New York; Kunstwerke, Berlin; Kunsthalle Basel; Secession, Wien; Institute of Contemporary Art, London. John Bock's installations, videos and performances have been exhibited in some of the most prestigious group exhibitions and biennials worldwide including two editions of the Venice Biennale; Manifesta 5, San Sebastian, Spain; Yokohama Triennial, Japan; and Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany.

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## Hard facts

# FONDAZIONE NICOLA TRUSSARDI

Artist: John Bock  
Title: **Meechfieber**

At: Sala Reale, Stazione Centrale  
Piazza Luigi di Savoia 1/26  
Milan

Dates: From November 9th to December 5th, 2004  
Open everyday from 10am to 8pm  
Free entrance

Curated by: Massimiliano Gioni, Artistic Director  
Fondazione Nicola Trussardi

Press Conference: November 9th, 2004  
Sala Reale, Stazione Centrale  
Piazza Luigi di Savoia 1/26  
Milan  
at 11:30

Opening: November 9th, 2004  
Sala Reale, Stazione Centrale  
Piazza Luigi di Savoia 1/26  
Milan  
at 18:30

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## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

**FONDAZIONE  
NICOLA  
TRUSSARDI**

### Ground Floor

John Bock  
Trail of Deutsche Bank  
2002  
Video: 2 sec. 9 frames  
Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin; Anton Kern, New York

John Bock  
Gast  
2004  
Video: 11'30''  
Camera: John Bock, Marc Aschenbrenner  
Camera, editing: Marc Aschenbrenner  
Collection: HMT, Berlin  
Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin

John Bock  
Alice Cooper  
2001  
Video: 04'54''  
Camera, editing: Knut Klaußen  
Editing: Marc Aschenbrenner  
Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin; Anton Kern, New York

John Bock  
Boxer  
2002  
Video: 02'30''  
Camera: Knut Klaußen  
Editing: Marc Aschenbrenner  
Collection: Charles Asprey, London  
Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin

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### First Floor

John Bock  
A gentleman works when a gentleman works a work  
2002  
Video: 28'11"  
Camera: Knut Klaußen  
Editing: Marc Aschenbrenner  
Collection: Snare / Christiansen, Oslo  
Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin

John Bock  
Meechfieber  
2004  
Film: 37'02"

Cast: John Bock, Ralf Rudolph, Anne Tismer

Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin; Anton Kern, New York  
Co-commissioned and co-produced by: Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan  
Carnegie International 2004-05, CMOA, Pittsburgh

## SELECTED WRITINGS

“Bock, as much as he is interested in expanding the limits of art, simply enjoys creating his own individual cosmos constructed within epic categories of thought. His work is a self-containing system, an unusual and careful blend of fantasy and rationality, subjective reflection and objective visual process, emotional challenge and sensual proposition.”

Jens Hoffmann

“Bock is a poet who likes to finger the tricky part of day-to-day existence: from art to farm labour, from relationships to Absolute Truth, his perceptions can be quite keen. He keeps things loose and fluid, but at the same time, he’s articulating totalities.”

Jan Avgikos

“John Bock is an artist who produces preposterous joy. His work takes place in an atmosphere of absurdity. The first time things occur as part of a tragedy, the second time as a comedy. He sometimes projects a slightly pensive mood the someone characterized as Elvis-has-left-the building melancholy. But in principle, his exits and entrances are pure joy.”

Daniel Birnbaum

“In the Renaissance, it was accepted that an artist could be a mathematician, engineer, musician, architect, poet and anatomist, all at once. Bock builds on this notion of the artist as someone who helps to expand people’s awareness of the world around them – but using fresh forms.”

Christian Gether

“John Bock formulates a ‘society language’ inspired by collective imagination, by topics and expressions either commonly used or generally admired. And in this transformative tongue, objects become character-like, transcend their physical limits and enter the dynamic dimension of the thinking process.”

Alessandra Pace

“John Bock’s videos spew forth in a dizzying array of German, French and English, their contents encompassing such wide-ranging topics as Hollywood cinema, Nazi Germany, agriculture, consumer goods, behavioural analysis, French literature and so on with a stream-of-consciousness-like cadence.”

Nancy Spector

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"I like to pick up on fields that are outside of classical art practice. slapstick, absurdity, banality, triviality are negative phrases. Puppetry is not really a matter for all times: slipping on a banana peels happens in my work in a different sense."

John Bock

"You should write something on Alice Cooper. I always mention him, and nobody picks up on that, of course. But he was important, he is entertainment. As a child I collected photographs of Alice Cooper, and later, flipping through them, I found one, where he was standing next to Dali. Of course I didn't know when I got it, because first there was Alice Cooper and then there was Dali."

John Bock

"I am interested in theatre when it is connected to society. I believe my work is somehow social: I want to talk about the world in an easy way. Art has to be easy."

John Bock

"My work without the public doesn't exist. I hear the reactions of the audience during my performances, the public participates: it is an active character. Even if I am not present, as in movies and films, I can hear them laughing, listening or even beaming. I don't teach to the audience: the audience is clever. And definitely does not need me."

John Bock

## FONDAZIONE NICOLA TRUSSARDI

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Following the installation by MAURIZIO CATTELAN for Piazza XXIV Maggio in May 2004 — which transformed a forgotten square of the city of Milan into a platform for free speech and public dialogue — the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi now presents MEECHFIEBER, a new film by John Bock co-produced with the Carnegie International 2004-05 in Pittsburgh, one of the most important collective exhibitions worldwide.

The Fondazione Nicola Trussardi continues its mission to infiltrate contemporary art into the daily fabric of Milan by producing and realizing contemporary artists' works specifically conceived for the public spaces of the city. The Fondazione Nicola Trussardi has also started a series of collaborations with important institutions in Italy and abroad: each of the projects produced by Fondazione Nicola Trussardi moves on to other venues and exhibitions.

SHORT CUT, the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi's first public art project by the artists Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset which was originally conceived for the Ottagono of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele and featured a white car and a caravan erupting out of the mosaic floor of the important monument of the city, travelled to Art Basel where it was shown in the main entrance square within the Art Unlimited projects. It will also soon be presented in the exhibition '1st Universal Experience: Art Life and The Tourist Eye', curated by Francesco Bonami at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. IF I HAD YOU, Darren Almond's video installation originally presented at Palazzo Della Ragione — the medieval archive of Milan stripped of all modern restorations specifically for the occasion, in fall 2003 — was then included in the 2004 Busan Biennale in Korea and previously shown by the Max Hetzler Gallery on the occasion of the Berlin Biennale. Maurizio Cattelan's installation for Piazza XXIV Maggio was subsequently shown within the first edition of the Sevilla Biennale, curated by Harald Szeemann.

The collaboration with national and international institutions contributes to making the Foundation an ideal link between different ways of approaching and supporting art and culture.

In October 2004, the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi was invited to be an official partner of the FRIEZE ART FAIR in London. The Fondazione Nicola Trussardi presented the project I'LL BE YOUR MIRROR: a wild bunch of international artists was invited to disperse rumours, doubts, and questions in the rooms of the sponsor hotel of the Frieze Art Fair, the City Inn Westminster Hotel, where most of the fair visitors and exhibitors were staying. Their statements, suspended somewhere between public confessions and political declarations, were scribbled directly onto the bathroom mirrors to open small fractures within the intimate spaces.

The Fondazione Nicola Trussardi is a non-profit institution for the promotion of contemporary art and culture. Neither a museum nor a collection, the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi acts as an agency for the production and the diffusion of contemporary art in a wide variety of contexts and channels.

Inspired by similar experiences in London and New York (Artangel, Public Art Fund), the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi aims at presenting contemporary art in both historical and symbolic spaces of the city of Milan, initiating a dialogue — and at times a confrontation — with the public. This activity is also accompanied by a series of more agile projects such as publications, inserts in magazines, and mail projects devoted to the dispersion of contemporary art in every aspect of our daily lives.

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