

Press release

Fabien Mérelle
282/210 mm

Exhibition from 18th March to 14th May 2010
Opening on 18th March 2010 from 6pm in the presence of the artist

Gallery Guy Bärtschi is pleased to welcome for its first exhibition in Switzerland, the young French artist **Fabien Mérelle**, who will present a series of drawings entitled « 282/210 mm », which is also the particular paper size faithfully used by the artist. Born in 1981 in Fontenay-aux-Roses, Fabien Mérelle works between Tours and Paris, where he shares his studio with Antoine Roegiers, another artist dear to the gallery. The artist, who holds a degree of the Beaux-Arts in Paris, has developed in his work, a clean and precise graphic line which reflects the young spirit of the artist in relationship to contemporary art and shows his extraordinary technical quality.

Mérelle's drawings cast us with irony into the phantasmagoric world of tales, mingling the animal world with the human world in hybrid figures. Forms are transformed, becoming a continuum recalling the dimension of a dream. It is this effect of morphogenesis that plays with the association of forms and ideas. At first glance the drawings appear to represent the natural, real world and then confusion arises through their surrealism. The infinitely large and the infinitely small will alternate in this "wonderland" *sui generis*, a world where the burlesque mocks the torments of the author.

With the precision of the engraver, he looks for anatomical perfection, searching to reflect the emotional charge of the artist: the result of texture and volume is a striking example.

The technique used to apply colour is quite unique: initially printed on the paper, the colour spot is subsequently achieved through drawing. This technique visually reinforces the idea of opposition between final result and creative process, contrast which is also obtained thanks to his complex allegorical language. The "Man-bird", a recurrent image in his drawings, opposed to the sheep, symbolizes his will of dissociating himself from society.

The autobiographical dimension is very important in Mérelle's oeuvre. The audience often witnesses the artist as the protagonist of his "surrealist" scenes, based on a collective but also personal imagination. Often dressed in his pyjamas, the artist recalls the dimension of sleep and the dream. The spectator is plunged into the intimate world of Mérelle. In French it is said "the gown does not make the friar" but in this case it does.