

Lumen Travo gallery presents

STEPHEN WILLATS
Assumptions and Identity,
Identity and Assumptions

From february 14th till march 14th

Lumen Travo gallery
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From wednesday to saturday 13-18
pm, sunday 13-17 pm

Since the early 1960's, the artist, Stephen Willats, has been leading a critical examination of environments shaped by contemporary life and has initiated the representation of a social agenda in art practice. Willats is one of the forerunners of conceptual art in Europe, embracing cybernetics, computer technology, semiotics and behavioural and social psychology in the furtherance of the element of interactivity which continues to be one of the key drivers in his work. This has inspired Willats to take his art practice directly into a range of environments that represent universally familiar contemporary cultural icons such as the housing estate or the urban shopping street.

Stephen Willats is an international figure in contemporary art; he has worked in the Netherlands since the 1970's where his work is represented in several public collections, it has been exhibited in the Van Abbe Museum Eindhoven, De Gemeente Museum den Haag, Breda, Venlo etc. Most recently his work was seen in *Becoming Dutch* in the Van Abbe Museum.

For his new solo show at Lumen Travo Gallery, Stephen Willats is presenting a selection of art works from 1994 – 2008 under the title: *Assumptions and Identity, Identity and Assumptions*. These works, all of which share Willats' key concern of actively involving the viewer, have never been presented together before and reflect a common theme of the transient relationships between people, our preconceptions of each other and their subsequent influence on our behaviour.

In *Three Time Lines for Promenading* the viewer is drawn into reviewing and comparing their assumptions about other people within three contrasting, iconic locations in London. Three videos and a wall installation show people shopping in Oxford Street, working in the financial district of Canary Wharf and walking in Hyde Park. The strength of the work lies in Willats' ability to challenge the viewer to reflect on the way they interpret and categorise others around them, how we compulsively try to read the subtleties of relationships between people as we negotiate our way through the city.

The installation *Imaginary Journey* takes the viewer along a multi-layered narrative, a narrative that compels the viewer to recreate their own journey with someone we have just met, to reflect on who we were accompanied by, why we were there, what happened as a result of the journey. Again the suburban locations – from a local high street to a park - provide a familiar context, a ready backdrop to our own imaginings and individual dramas.