

The Lieven Gevaert Research Centre for Photography is pleased to announce:

**The Hopelessness of Contemporary Art:  
The Case of Renzo Martens' *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty* (2008)**



Renzo Martens, still from *Episode III* (2008). Color video, sound. Duration: 90 minutes. (English subtitles). Courtesy Wilkinson Gallery London, Galerie Fons Welters Amsterdam, and the artist.

An international symposium organized by T.J. Demos (University College London), Hilde Van Gelder (KULeuven) and Dieter Lesage (Erasmushogeschool Brussels), to be held on 21 May 2010 at The Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts (KVAB).

Speakers: Renzo Martens (artist, Brussels/New York), Thomas Keenan (Director, Human Rights Project and Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, Bard College, New York), Carles Guerra (director, La Virreina, Barcelona), Toma-Muteba Luntumbue (artist and curator, Brussels/Kinshasa).

Moderators: T.J. Demos and Hilde Van Gelder.

**Program:**

10.00-11.30 a.m. Screening of Renzo Martens' *Episode III*

11.30 a.m.-1.00 p.m. Lunch break

1.00 p.m. Welcome by VLAC-director Prof. em. Marc De Mey

1.00-3.00 p.m. Symposium

3.00-4.00 p.m. Wine reception

This symposium questions what hope can be offered by contemporary art in relation to political change when it concerns dire situations that appear as otherwise hopeless. It takes as its case study the 2008 film *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty* by Renzo Martens, 2010 recipient of the prestigious Culture Prize of the Flemish Community. An interdisciplinary gathering of distinguished speakers will examine the film's investigation of the imaging of Congolese poverty, considering how it pressures the contradictions of humanitarianism, photojournalism, and concerned contemporary art. If the film poses the vexing question 'who owns images of poverty?', we will examine the ethics and economics surrounding representations of post-colonial suffering. The symposium will analyze the aesthetic and political implications of this provocative film, asking as well whether the claims for art's political effectiveness have become all too complacent in recent curatorial, art-critical, and political writing. If so, can the critical exposure of art's hopelessness, or at least its ambiguity regarding politics, represent a source of hope, distinct from despair?

The symposium is organized with the generous support of the KVAB, within the framework of its contact fora program, and the KULeuven. It intends to provide a public forum for specialists and the interested public. It also represents an integral part of The Flemish Academic Centre for Science and the Arts (VLAC)-sponsored collaboration between T.J. Demos and Hilde Van Gelder (2009-2010).

Entrance to the symposium is free but places are extremely limited. Please register before April 16, 2010 through the website of the Lieven Gevaert Centre (<http://www.lievengevaertcentre.be/conferences.htm>). Confirmation of your registration will be sent soon after this date.