

## **Martin Skauen**

### **Servants Swept the Sand Smooth**

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 14, 6 – 8 pm

Exhibition Dates: March 14 – April 11, 2009

Mihai Nicodim Gallery is proud to present "Servants Swept the Sand Smooth", the first solo exhibition of Norwegian artist Martin Skauen in the US.

Martin Skauen confronts the viewers of his drawings and animated films with some truly apocalyptic scenarios. In formats that are sometimes quite huge, he evokes dismal places that may be the scenes of murder, war or cruel rituals. Skauen's pictorial language owes much to the nightmarish visions of Hieronymus Bosch, for example, or to Greek mythology or contemporary sadomasochist comics. He creates these disturbing motifs with sarcasm or very black humor, and the erotic is couple with violence or its latent presence. In these images one sees the figures of martyrs, torturers, perverts and hermaphrodites interacting in a multitude of ways, whereby the narrative 'scene' always remains mysterious, admitting several interpretations. His filmic loops - produced on the basis of drawings - are to be understood in the sense of "extended drawings": both formats define and influence each other mutually and underline the artist's interest in the transitory. Whether static or moving, Martin Skauen's pictures radiate a strange, melancholy fascination, which utterly enthralls the viewer.

Martin Skauen was born in Fredrikstad, Norway in 1975. He studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Oslo and last year completed a residency at Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin. Skauen has exhibited in numerous group exhibitions including Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo, Athens Biennial, Athens, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Gothenburg Kunsthall in Sweden and Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo. Recent solo exhibitions include Galleri MGM, Oslo, Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin and Laura Bartlett Gallery, London.