

their dabbling in a type of 'me-and-my-cool-friends' aesthetic, which Conner's always avoided.

Conner recently remarked: 'I don't think of pieces as having a beginning or end.' By demarcating the photos temporally (half were printed in 1985 and half last summer), he suggests that printing and exhibiting are steps in the continuing exploration of processing images, each photo as much a fragment of a series as an independent work. The notion of fluid compositions dovetails nicely with Conner's film *LUKE* (2004), shot on 8mm in 1967 during the filming of *Cool Hand Luke*. His friend Dennis Hopper had invited Conner to come along, and he began filming while riding to the outdoor set with the production crew. The slowed-down 22-minute film – it would last about two and a half minutes if it ran at the standard 24 frames per second – mostly concerns the behind-the-scenes action: cameramen, grips, waiting actors, prop handlers, electricians, etc. Conner shoots the preparations for the chain-gang sequence of the movie, showing the crew prepping a country road so it appears as if the actors are laying fresh tar. Heat rises from the pavement like mist, and the shirtless men glisten with sweat. Paul Newman, blond head and bronze torso, moves slowly through the frame like a demi-god. But rather than languish over these protracted erotic glimpses, Conner undercuts any sentimentality by jumping to a shot of a gaffer adjusting the boom, avoiding any aura of wistful nostalgia.

Many of Conner's films play with time and measure (slowing the running speed to elongate each shot) and he did a lot of single-frame filming in *Luke* with the intention that it would be run at five frames per second. But without production money Conner ignored the footage for decades until approached by composer Peter Gleeson, who wanted to make a soundtrack. Ultimately produced digitally to lengthen each shot still further, it runs at three frames per second and screens like a genuine collaboration, Gleeson's rich, sultry and plaintive electronic compositions perfectly matching the kind of endless summer day Conner captures on screen. The film is an exercise in protracted and suspended beauty, a rhapsody in honey-coloured frames. **Katie Stone**

## Chris Evans

Galerie Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam,  
The Netherlands

Painted onto the racing green walls of Chris Evans' exhibition 'The Rock and the Judge', the words 'Militant Bourgeois' resembled the car brand names worn above the back bumpers of family vehicles and seemed ready to take their place in a parking-lot roll-call somewhere between the Renault Mégane and the Ford Mondeo. But while there's often an absurd dissonance between automobile monikers and the objects they describe (has anyone ever felt sunny about a Nissan Sunny, or cavalier about a Vauxhall Cavalier?), Evans' wall text was, in its complex way, very much of a piece with the works in his show. 'Militant Bourgeois' suggests both a taking apart and a belligerent upholding of middle-class values. The images and objects in 'The Rock and the Judge,' however, occupied neither of these poles. Rather, they lay in an in-between space, somewhere between 'straight' society and a fantasy of the avant-garde.

The art historian Michael Baxandall once wrote that a work of art is 'the deposit of a social relationship'. It's hard to think of more immediate contemporary proof of this than Evans' screenprint *Hermes Candles Painting for the Hermes Fraternity, Rotterdam* (2004). Here six young men stand in a panelled room, their suits well tailored, their longish hair slick and lordly. They're members of Rotterdam University's élite

Hermes Fraternity, whose alumni make up a sizeable number of the Netherlands' business leaders, and even of its cabinet. In the middle of the group sits a painting by Evans of two silhouetted, recently extinguished candles, their smoke pluming upwards to form a triumphal arch. Commissioned by the fraternity, the painting could be thought of as the material trace of a re-enactment of the Renaissance patron-artist relationship, a set-up that Modernism was supposed to, but never quite did, dispel. What's interesting here isn't Evans' rolling back of the artist's supposed emancipation, but the context in which it's done, and the fact he does it with a (mostly) straight face. The Netherlands, of course, is a beacon of the political left, which makes the patrician mien of Hermes' frat boys all the more alarming. Looking at the piece, it's as though, held together with cuff links and seigniorial self-confidence, they're about to pass through the arch in Evans' painting and into the nation's future, and the artist is doing nothing to stop them. Indeed, it's possible to collar him as their accomplice, but that would be to indulge in a grad-school blindness to the limits of art's ability to shape the world. After all, do these guys really need the help of an artist (of all people!) to get that seat on the board?

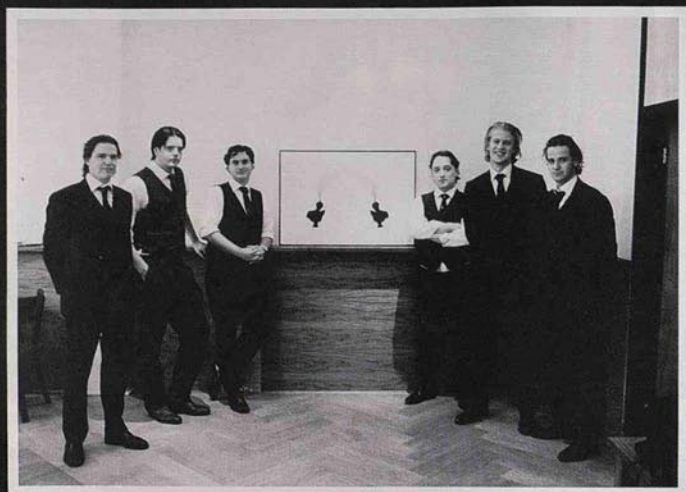
Elsewhere in the show Evans ran into other representatives of the powers that be. In *The Rock and the Judge* (2004) he juxtaposed a drawing of a bewigged magistrate by ex-police officer Richard Hill with one of his own sculptures, a rugged approximation of a boulder. Wielding his gavel, the magistrate appeared to pass judgement (aesthetic, and perhaps political) on the sculpture, an act of critical pre-emption that leaves the viewer oddly speechless. This sense of intractable determinism, of deals already done, lived on in *Magnetic Promenade* (2004), an airbrush painting on paper that depicted four tripod-like sculptures in a fantasy sculpture park. Loosely based on existing public sculptures, they looked like the product of an obscurely gathered and long-ago disbanded focus group made up of faceless technocrats or sci-fi literalists – at any rate, of nobody with much of a feel for what art in the public sphere might mean, or do.

For all this, though, Evans' practice is far from being a set of capitulations to the powerful. Rather, it asks the art audience (with its vague leftist swagger) whether there's anything to be gained from getting busy with those sections of society the avant-garde traditionally dismissed. *Cop Talk* (2005) is a poster for a recent Evans-organized police recruitment drive at the Rietveld Art Academy. Given the small proportion of art students who go on to pursue a successful career as artists, and the pleasing thought of being policed by people who have passed through the liberal art school system, this would seem to be a sensible idea, or at least one that's no less sensible than any other about how an artist might thread through the social fabric. That it will never work is the key to the brilliance of Evans' project. It asks us to rethink what heckling from the sidelines means, and to hear the hollow ringing that sometimes accompanies our rebel yells. **Tom Morton**

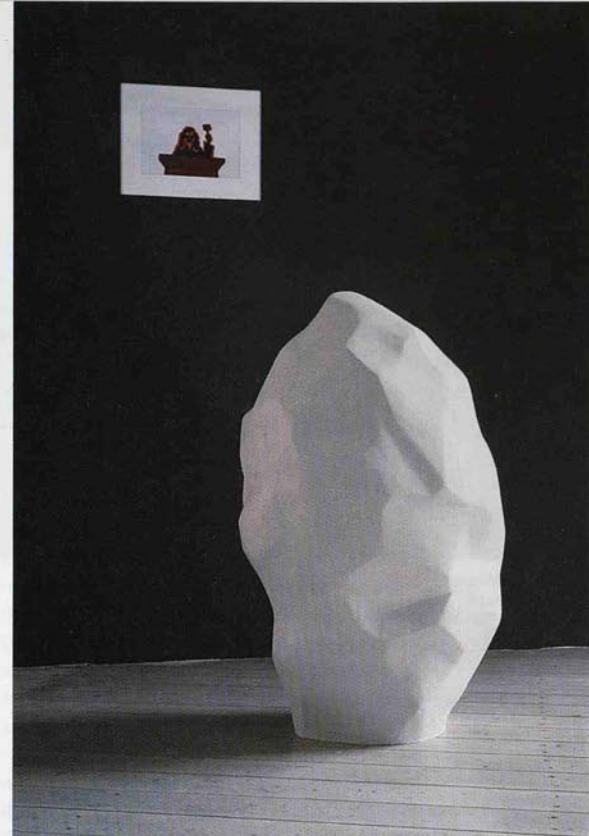
## Akram Zaatari

Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany

The first thing encountered was a reading table covered with publications and rows of postcards showing vintage photographs of Arab citizens. This was not a cash-strapped institution's hard sell of exhibition-related items, but a way of introducing the realm in which Akram Zaatari works; all the items relate to his ongoing efforts for the Arab Image Foundation, which



Chris Evans  
*Hermes Candles Painting for the Hermes Fraternity, Rotterdam*  
2004 Silkscreen on paper 63x87cm



Chris Evans (with commissioned felt-tip drawing by Detective  
Constable Richard Hill of the East Yorkshire Police Force, UK)  
*The Rock and the Judge*  
2005 Plaster and pigment, felt-tip pen Installation view