

Press release

PLAYSTATION@Galerie Fons Welters
21 October 2006 – 18 November 2006
Opening: Saturday 21 October 17:00 – 19:00
Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 13:00 – 18:00

Annegret Kellner *Dermatica*

A series of small incisions are made slowly and meticulously with a small scalpel, in the manner of a surgeon at work. The firm, moving skin appears to open up like a beautiful butterfly before our eyes. Partly revolted, partly attracted by the sheer beauty of the image, we repeatedly avert our eyes and then look back in fascination.

Our skin is literally what divides us from the outside world. It constitutes a clear boundary between 'me' and 'not me'. So this covering is of vital importance to us. The blurring of the boundary between you and me, between inside and outside, is a revolting, indeed menacing, idea. Yet it is precisely the existence of this boundary that makes it possible to achieve contact with, to touch, someone else. Skin carries connotations of tenderness and sexuality, but only when the boundaries have been clearly defined.

Annegret Kellner plays with the idea of violating the human skin. Using needle and thread – and again wielding her delicate surgical hand – she has stitched right across beautiful, fragile tulips. The sensual reaction evoked by these images is a mix of contradictory emotions – disgust, tenderness and a natural response to beauty. **Kellner** does not in fact violate any boundary, she merely stimulates our fear of such violation, makes us feel the uniqueness of these sensations.

Dermatica is suggestive of skin diseases, but also evokes the science that researches and heals them. The exhibition space recalls a hospital or a doctor's consulting room. The photographs, videos and other installations adopt a part medical, part aesthetic approach to the body, evoking a tension between the mutilation and preservation of the skin. Like a physician, **Annegret Kellner** explores pain and delicacy as two sides of the same coin. But only those who feel good within their own bodies will find her work bearable.

[Laura van Grinsven]