

**STANDARD (OSLO)  
PRESS RELEASE**

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**JOHANNA BILLING**

**"MAGICAL WORLD"**

**23.02.-26.03.2006 / Opening: Thursday 23.02.2006 / 19.00-21.00**

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**STANDARD (OSLO) is pleased to announce its first exhibition with the Swedish video artist Johanna Billing. Showing her most recent work "Magical World" Billing addresses a pivotal point of change for former East European countries, using a pop song from 1968 as its point of departure.**

Title for an essay not yet written on the works of Johanna Billing: "The Texture Of Repetition". Johanna Billing's video works – in most cases looped – dwell on routines, rehearsals and rituals. Always staged, they present us with people in concentrated situations, where changes are taking place, are about to take place or could take place. Shifting focus between these actions (or the awaiting of them), the individuals portrayed, and the context in which they appear, Billing's works seldom offer straight narratives yet present the viewer with a vast amount of peripheral information. As described by curator Helene Selder: "Johanna Billing's films alternate, in a unique way, between charged silence and a narrative borne by pop songs. There are many things that we are unable to speak about without ending up in commonplaces and clichés". As a result, the people who appear in Billing's works are either silent or they are singing.

"Magical World" is a result of collaboration with a group of children from a free after-school music club based at a rundown 1980s cultural centre in Dubrava, a suburb of Zagreb, Croatia. The work introduces us them rehearsing "Magical World" – a song chosen by the artist and written by the Afro-American singer Sidney Barnes (1968). The lyrics – a melancholic description of transformation – resonate with the transformation this relative young country is undergoing in adapting to the European Union demands while also establishing its own fragile national identity. This is further articulated by the children both struggling to deal with a song in a language that is not their own, and – because of their age – struggling to grasp its content. "Magical World" interweaves images of the children's performance with various views of the suburban surroundings, echoing the melancholy of the song and the empathy we may feel toward the children who will be growing up under these conditions and be the ones to change them.

"Magical World" was one of two works by Johanna Billing included in last year's Istanbul Biennial and will be screened later this month as a solo project at PS1, New York. Johanna Billing (b 1973) lives and works in Stockholm where she received her education at Konstfack. Since graduating in 1999, Billing has participated in numerous international exhibitions including the Venice Biennial (2003), the Moscow Biennial (2005), and the forthcoming Momentum – The Nordic Art Biennial (September, 2006). During the exhibition period, Johanna Billing's works may also be seen in a solo exhibition at the kunsthall Marabouparken in Stockholm, where she's also participating in the "The Moderna Exhibition 2006" at Moderna Museet. Other current shows also include a solo show at the Knoxville Museum of Art, USA.

*For further information please visit our webpage: [www.standardoslo.no](http://www.standardoslo.no) or contact Eivind Furnesvik at [eivind@standardoslo.no](mailto:eivind@standardoslo.no) or +47 917 07 429 / +47 22 60 13 10. NB! Note new web and e-mail addresses. STANDARD (OSLO) is open Tuesday-Friday: 12.00-17.00 / Saturday-Sunday: 12.00-16.00.*

*Next exhibition: "Mafia (Or One Unopened Packet of Cigarettes)"*

*Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla / Tauba Auerbach / Gardar Eide*

*Einarsson / Matias Faldbakken / Claire Fontaine / Daniel Knorr / David Lieske / Torbjørn*

*Rødland / Johannes Wohnseifer / Curator: Eivind Furnesvik*

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