

Flash Art

Mark Raidpere
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by Ahu Antmen

ISTANBUL

MARK RAIDPERE

PLATFORM GARANTI

One of the most memorable artists from the last Venice Biennial was Mark Raidpere, the fashion photographer-cum-video artist who represented Estonia. Titled "Isolator," the show was true to its words. Two of the videos there and a new video work make up for a rather limited exhibition at Platform Garanti, yet that huge feeling of isolation is again felt, especially in *10 Men* (2003), an early work depicting ten long-term inmates at Tartu prison performing their social, psychological and physical isolation on video. The camera reflects on these criminals with great intensity, but what we see is a fleeting moment of innocence and fragility. We are isolated from their world, but become deeply involved as Raidpere shows us the essence of their soul: so human and animal, so masculine and feminine at the same time. All codes are shattered to reveal something inner. Raidpere's exploration of identity and solitude continues in a rather playful manner in *Shifting Focus* (2005), in which the artist attempts for about ten minutes to confess something to his mother: why he is so apologetic we never find out, but the tension building around the idea of confession itself says more than any confession, and the irony at the end turns our attention to the blurred area between reality and fiction. Raidpere's new video *Andrey/Andris* (2006) delves into sexual codes and role-playing: a young boy takes to the dance floor in a strip bar. His works are performed but real; it seems his subjects perform for themselves rather than for the camera. Perhaps this is what makes these works so captivating. Raidpere certainly leaves a powerful impression be it with one, two or three works.

Ahu Antmen



MARK RAIDPERE, *10 Men*, 2003. Still from video, 8 mins. Courtesy Platform Garanti, Istanbul.

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