

AN AUSTRIAN ART COLLECTIVE IS GRANTING THE CHANCE TO TAKE YOUR SEX LIFE TO THE NEXT LEVEL — **UNDERGROUND!**

DIRTY DEEDS DONE SIX FEET DEEP

by NADJA SAYEJ

IMAGINE OPENING UP THE NEWSPAPER TO FIND A CLASSIFIED AD OFFERING THE NO-CHARGE OPPORTUNITY TO BE BURIED ALIVE IN A COFFIN FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.

Back in 2005, spooky Austrian art collective Monochrom and its founder Johannes Grenzfurthner took out ads in North American newspapers offering to do just that as part of an exhibit called "Experience the Experience of Being Buried Alive." The group travelled to Los Angeles, Vancouver and San Francisco to stage the burials, attracting lineups so long, the events had to be organized by a raffle.

But it wasn't all just a big spectacle. The group offered lectures about the history and science of determining death, and the medical history of being buried alive in what they collectively referred to as an investigation of the scientific debate first started by the *Thesaurus of Horror* (published in 1817), questioning the controversy over the fallibility of the signs of death and premature burials.

"Even in the 19th century it was said that every tenth person was buried alive," reads an official Monochrom statement. "Various death test methods were developed, for instance. Security coffins with bell pulls and air hoses were patented; mortuaries were built, in which corpses were left for days to natural decay. It developed into a serious case of mass hysteria in Germany and France in the 18th and 19th centuries."

Well, it seems Grenzfurthner and his cast of ghouls are up to it again with the recent launch of the Six Feet Under Club, a new art project that allows couples to have sex inside of a coffin. Don't be deceived by the name, though — a play on the infamous Mile High Club, whose members have had sex on an airplane — they won't literally bury you that deep, as the coffin sits inside a dumpster filled with dirt.

After signing a release form that informs you that being buried alive is dangerous to your health ("I hereby agree to accept any and all risks of property damage,

personal injury, post-traumatic stress, or death."), the undertaker Grenzfurthner will remind you: "Don't worry, we have a permit. For the dumpster, anyway." Then your eulogy will be read aloud and you'll be invited to step inside of a black coffin with your lover — for fifteen hot minutes — to have sex.

You may want to take note of the video camera inside the coffin, however. That's where the whole "art" aspect comes into play. Your sexual talents will be projected, in night vision, onto a nearby brick wall for passersby — or funeral attendees — to watch. 'Til death do you part (and then some).

In San Francisco, where the project was launched last October, Monochrom buried three gay and three straight couples.

"One guy was dressed up as a priest," says Grenzfurthner, an academic, writer and artist. "And one woman complained that the coffin was too narrow to administer a proper blowjob. Which is not true, by the way. I did a test fornication in our self-made coffin, and we could have had a threesome in there! Amateurs!"

Whereas the group's Experience the Experience of Being Buried Alive exhibit explored the history of death assessment, the Six Feet Under Club experiments with people's willingness to put something very private into the public sphere.

"Our project can be seen as an absurd parody of pornographic cinema or an examination of the high value placed on sexual privacy," says Grenzfurthner.

With plans to bring the project to New York and Berlin in 2011, you may want to beat the lineups and contact Monochrom directly at 6fuc@monochrom.at. Whatever you do, just try not to be late for your own funeral. You've only got fifteen minutes after all. 💀



Buried Pleasure: (left) Johannes Grenzfurthner delivers a eulogy, and a couple collects themselves after their fifteen minutes "underground."

