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PRESS RELEASE

KAI KALJO

20 October – 17 November 2006

Anthony Reynolds Gallery is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in this country of the Estonian artist Kai Kaljo

Kaljo's video work has been exhibited widely, including showings at the Renaissance Society in Chicago, Tate Modern, the Sprengel Museum, Hanover, and Villa Manin, Trieste. Two video works have been seen previously at Anthony Reynolds Gallery, *Pathétique* (1999) and *Domestic Violence* (2001).

When Kaljo made her first video work in 1997 for an exhibition called '*Funny versus Bizarre'* she was quoted as saying: "I just couldn't imagine anything more bizarre that my own life at that moment and decided to make a video called *A Loser*…" This has since become an internationally celebrated work but '*the bizarre'* - visual, emotional, physical – seems to be central to most of Kaljo's work: How very strange is life amidst its normality; how very strange is it that "*The more I work the poorer I become*" (2005); how very strange that there are holes in the wall in Germany where you can leave your unwanted baby (*Babyklappe*, 2006); how very strange that driving through the desert one passes an 'oasis' of casinos and rollercoasters and pink hotels (*Mirage*, 2002); how wonderful is the soft pointillist image of the sky over Bratislava/Chicago/London (*Skies*, 1998-2005). Kaljo just notices these things but she has an extraordinary ability, employed without artifice, to inject layers of pathos and humour into these passing observations, lifting them to a level that haunts the memory. As the camera turns away from the empty Babyklappe the sunlight just catches the shadow of the woman walking away down the street. We notice this as incidentally as the artist seems to have noticed the subject of her film but that fleeting shadow adds immeasurably to the conflicting emotions of the work.

One small image in the exhibition is a photograph of twelve miniature wooden musical instruments arranged nicely on a blue cloth by the side of the road. The title: *What was for sale on International Women's Day 2005 in Armenia.* It is hard to conceive of a more intricate web of the trite and the significant, the charming and the portentous, need and irrelevance.

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