

PRESS RELEASE

MATIAS FALDBAKKEN 'MAINTENANCE'

Simon Lee Gallery, Hong Kong

Opening: Friday 5th October 6 – 8pm

Exhibition continues: Saturday 6th October - Saturday 17th November 2012

Simon Lee Gallery Hong Kong is proud to present an exhibition of new work by renowned Norwegian artist and writer Matias Faldbakken.

In his practice as an artist, Matias Faldbakken often displaces and reconfigures mass-produced functional objects with a specific cultural significance using the most minimal means of intervention possible, to develop what could be termed a kind of agitated idleness. Garbage bags, Jerry cans, Lockers, tiles, televisions, paper, posters, books, magazines, chrome spray, electrical tape, nails, lever straps, angle grinders and metal bindings are some of the materials he uses to draw, crunch, screw, spray, compress and invert, in a variety of apparently vandalistic gestures, interrupting any habitual approach to reading and interpreting the object.

In Faldbakken's words, "(in my practice) a 'parody' of the formal is never far away...at the same time the insistence on the physical presence of the work...and the possibility of its aesthetic precision, might gain enough authority for these 'comedic' aspects (of my practice) to be constantly destabilized or overruled...the idea of resigning, to resort to a more muted, gestural, wordless visual and formal practice because it has the air of being simultaneously doomed and potent..I like that. That 'in-between' quality. "

For this exhibition, Faldbakken elaborates on his ongoing exploration of serial objects, with 'Untitled (Coin Locker Sculpture). As with his earlier (Untitled (Locker Sculpture #1-3), he uses a simple technique to merge or make unique a series of identical, mass produced lockers. A horizontal line is cut through the lockers with an angle grinder, but this seemingly destructive gesture is at the same time an unifying one. The cut line could be read as a drawing, transforming the locker from container to content.

In addition to the exhibition, there will be new canvas works on view. While Faldbakken's work is often read through the lens of the Situationists, Dada and Punk, this ongoing series of canvases tends towards the negativistic litany of Ad Reinhardt, whose signature black paintings, in combination with his texts, challenged the limits of art production as such. Echoing Reinhardt's zero-format 5ft square scale, the canvases are made in high grade Belgian linen with a handmade stretcher in Norwegian wood, in deliberate contrast to the apparently casual gestures that constitute their content. Faldbakken first used black electrical tape to make marks on the canvas surface, always with the minimal intervention possible to achieve his objective: both a rejection of language and a mocking of form.

The results are compositions that recall by turns the firm lines of Constructivist paintings and the absurdist poetry of the Situationists, while refusing any trite discussion about painting and what it could/should be. He has developed this series to use graphite and most recently Molotow white tagger pen on canvas, seen in these new works – a thick, satisfyingly indelible pen used by graffiti artists, to create standard forms – squares, rectangles and overlapping lines – but drawn free hand - with an inherent nod to both the formal language of Minimalism without the precision, and to the language of vandalism, which interests him specifically for its attempts to remain outside of the overriding mainstream and its casually destructive force as a counterpoint to the rational.

Faldbakken was born in Hobro, Denmark in 1973. He studied at the [National Academy of Fine Arts](#) in Bergen and later at the [Städelschule](#) in Frankfurt. His work has been exhibited widely in Europe, with solo exhibitions in the Scandinavian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, [National Museum of Art, Oslo](#), the IKON Gallery, Birmingham, Kunsthalle Skt Gallen, Switzerland. Kunsthalle Friedricanum, Kassel, Schinkel Pavillion, Berlin, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany and OCA Oslo. This year, among other projects, he participated in dOCUMENTA (13) and opens 'Intervention # 21', a solo presentation at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.