

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MATIAS FALDBAKKEN

*KNOWN TO FEW
UNKNOWN TO FEWER*

19 MAY – 3 JULY 2010

OPENING: TUESDAY 18 MAY, 6 – 8PM



Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present new works by Matias Faldbakken in his second solo show with the gallery.

Faldbakken employs vandalism and a destructive attitude towards pop culture in his visual practice, circling around the idea of artistic production as a 'negative progression'. This might at first appear to be a cynical approach towards art production, but is rather his exploration of the oxymoron at the heart of the idea 'if art is the opposite of work, why work?' Often using language as a starting point to make his images, obscuring, suppressing and destroying letters, phrases and sentences in order to create visual abstractions, Faldbakken's interest lies in abstraction as a technique for rejection, rather than as an aesthetic exercise.

Developed from his earlier works using tape on canvas or directly on to walls, and from his interest in the Reinhardtian monochrome's preoccupation with being a sign that refuses to signify, for his second exhibition at the gallery, Faldbakken has made a series of works using plastic garbage bags sporting deliberately incoherent acronyms and drawings. These acronyms are borrowed from titles, quotes and motivational slogans that serve as vehicles for Faldbakken's practice of reticence. The scrawls are executed quickly, borrowing elements from the graffiti tag, for instance the long sloppy extension of one letter that taggers often include, which here serves to use up as much space as possible, to be visually annoying and to maximize the damage to the surface. In this series, the poverty of the material and the deliberate unintelligibility of the text collide, occupying a limbo between writing, image and object so that the works cannot be read meaningfully as any of the above.

Two sculptural works also feature in the new exhibition. The 'Poster Sculpture' consists simply of a stack of posters bound tightly together, tight enough to become a free-standing column. This process renders the content illegible and destroys its function as a vehicle for announcing information. The Warholian seriality of the poster is also reversed, being upturned by the unyielding pressure of the bindings that allow the work to be read only as an object. Here the sculptural process is an attempt to contain the mass production of the poster and limit its reach.

The Liquor bottle sculpture expands Faldbakken's series of container sculptures that deal with the possibilities and problematics of escapism. The apparently lazily grouped installation of liquor bottles with their promise of intoxication and joyful irresponsibility is accompanied by the lurking threat of loss of control and a descent into the irrational. This is underlined by the fact that the sculpture literally begs to be stolen.

Faldbakken (b. 1973), lives and works in Oslo. He studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Bergen and later at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main. His work has been exhibited widely in Europe, most recently in "Shocked into Abstraction" at the National Museum of Art, Oslo which later travelled to the IKON Gallery in Birmingham, in "Extreme Siesta" at the Kunsthalle St Gallen in Switzerland, and he is currently showing in "You Think You Go But You Gon't" at Objectif in Antwerp. Forthcoming exhibitions in 2010 include shows at the Kunsthalle Friedricanum, Kassel, Schinkel Pavillion, Berlin and the Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen in Germany.

For further press materials please contact the gallery via press@simonleegallery.com or call +44 207 491 0100.

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