

PRESS RELEASE

October 20, 2014

BEN THORP BROWN: SPECULATIVE PRESENCE

November 7 - December 31, 2014



Ben Thorp Brown, *Untitled*, 2014. Lucite. 6 x 9 x 1.5 inches (15.24 x 22.86 x 3.81 cm)

Opening reception: Thursday, November 6th, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm

Bischoff Projects
Hanauer Landstrasse 20 - 22
D-60314 Frankfurt am Main

Hours: Tue - Fri 1 - 6:30, Sat 11 - 2 & by appointment

Bischoff Projects is pleased to announce *Speculative Presence*, an exhibition of new work by **Ben Thorp Brown**. The exhibition focuses on deal toys, sculptural objects made to commemorate business transactions, which have developed from minimal plaques to kitsch symbols. Since the 1970s, such trophies, also known as lucite tombstones, have been produced in sets of a few dozen on the occasion of mergers, acquisitions, and public offerings of stock (IPOs). Brown looks at the production and aesthetics of these customized, limited-edition objects as a means to consider the relationship between finance and artistic labor.

In a short documentary film titled *Toymakers*, Brown examines the conditions of deal toy production. Brown filmed at a factory in Quebec, where more than half a million deal toys are produced each year for global corporations ranging from Google to Deutsche Bank, Heinz to Beats by Dre. In the film, he depicts how these objects — physical manifestations of immaterial financial transactions — are made. The factory's fifty employees work on the production line with remarkable skill and care, as acrylic plastic is mixed, poured into molds, machined, and polished. A man assembles a toy truck using his hands and a hammer, revealing the craftsmanship behind the objects used to memorialize global finance.

Brown commissioned workers at this factory to build customized lucite sculptures of his own design. In these lucite works, Brown links deal toys with art-historical tropes referencing Pop art, conceptualism, and abstract painting as well as the plastic reliefs of Marcel Broodthaers. Working with brightly colored cast-off materials from the deal-toy production process, Brown stages a series of six tombstone plaques as abstract paintings, and a collection of six multicolored upright fists makes use of the symbol of uprising in the form of financial ephemera. Other lucite works include a series of blocks embedded with traded commodities such as oil and coal. In a series that appropriates the distinct graphic language of tombstone financial advertisements, Brown subtly varies the black borders on transparent surfaces, handling these forms as minimal art objects.

As deal toys develop from minimally designed text blocks to elaborately designed kitsch, they reflect a culture that moves away from simple, deliberate records of capital to a form that provides increasingly immediate gratification. Brown looks at how the abstractions of capitalism have been recorded here—diminutive and playful despite the stark economic facts they illustrate—and links them with contemporary art production.

Ben Thorp Brown was born in 1983 in New York, USA, where he lives and works. He received a B.A. at Williams College, an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. Brown was the recipient of the John Quincy Adams MFA Fellowship from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Leonhardt Cassullo Video Fellowship at Creative Time, and the Florence J. Chandler travel fellowship from Williams College. His videos have been shown at MoMA's Documentary Fortnight, Harvard Film Archive, Images Festival, and in exhibitions and presentations at The Whitney Museum (New York), SculptureCenter (New York), MoMA PS1 (New York), and Vox Populi (Philadelphia). He is a participant in the 2014–2015 LMCC Workspace Residency, a visiting scholar at NYU, and a 2015 Artist-in-Residence at the Chinati Foundation.

Currently on view / upcoming:

Michael Riedel: Michael Riedel liest Oskar

Michael Riedel will give a public lecture on his work.

Tuesday, November 18, 2014, 8 pm

Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Austria

Daniel Turner: Freezer burn (group show)

November 8 - December 20, 2014

Hauser & Wirth, New York, USA

Michael Riedel: Wo ist hier? #1: Malerei und Gegenwart (group show)

September 21 - November 23, 2014

Kunstverein Reutlingen, Reutlingen, Germany

Michael Riedel: Give Love Back. Ata Macias & Partner (group show)

September 13, 2014 - January 11, 2015

Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

N. Dash, David Keating, Jens Risch, Fred Sandback

September 4 - October 31, 2014

Bischoff Projects, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Jens Risch: Netz (group show)

July 28 - November 16, 2014

Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Kiel, Germany

Michael Riedel: Dual air [Dürer]

On long-term view

Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France

For all other information please contact the gallery at info@bischoffprojects.com or at +49 (0)178 924 32 50.