

For immediate release

Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset

Opening Soon

October 20 to November 24, 2001

Opening reception: Saturday, October 20, 6-8pm

In their first solo exhibition at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset continue their investigation of urban and spatial structures in relation to social issues and the art market. Since 1997, the artists have presented a great number of architectural and sculptural installations in an ongoing series of works entitled 'Powerless Structures.'

For the Istanbul Biennial, which opened September 21st, the artist duo constructed a full-scale model of a typical Modernist Kunsthall descending into the ground while located outdoor among ancient ruins. In 1998, they dug down a whole gallery in the museum park of Reykjavik in Iceland. Earlier this year, Elmgreen & Dragset altered the physical features of the white cube exhibition hall of Portikus in Frankfurt by curving the floor in its full length upwards and bending the skylight downwards so as to mirror the floor. But the works by Elmgreen & Dragset can also take the format of small and humorous interventions. At last year's Armory Art Fair in New York the artists discreetly installed a placard at the entrance, warning visitors that 7 pickpockets had been invited for the art fair.

Opening Soon / Powerless Structures, Fig 242 is a commentary on the mediating role that art galleries have played in reshaping and transforming the urban landscape of the city. Throughout the last decade, galleries have been moving into many of the city's lowest rent neighborhoods, and effectively contributing to the gentrification of these areas. Of course, the cycle subsequently comes around, so that the galleries find it necessary to leave these same neighborhoods due to increasingly high rents or other economic concerns. Fashion shops or chain stores then take over and push the real estate values even higher. In New York's SoHo we saw such changes. Similar changes have taken place in the East End of London, in Mitte in Berlin and the pattern seems to repeat itself in New York's Chelsea, where the first fashion brands have already opened their stores. As such, the outlook for the art market leaves little doubt that several of Chelsea's 170 galleries won't survive the imminent recession. By covering up the windows of Tanya Bonakdar Gallery and having a sign announcing that Prada will open soon (at the same time a reference to the destiny of former Guggenheim Soho space) Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset deliver an ironic statement on "still being part of the game."

Cornered / Powerless Structures Fig 244 is the only work on display inside the gallery. In the main gallery space, a clock is placed in the far corner of the room. As much of their work exploits dysfunction as a method of illustration, the clock takes the shape of the corner so that the hands of the clock cannot complete a full turn-cycle. Thus, time has stopped, literally – suggesting that the spectator seize this moment, in the aftermath of the September 11th tragedy, for reflection and contemplation. This stands in contrast to the predominant prescription offered by the local and national civil leadership, which is to 'continue business as usual,' despite the feelings of guilt and emotional trauma that this may engender.

Selected solo shows: 2001 Kunsthalle Zürich; Powerless Structures, Fig 111, Portikus, Frankfurt a.M.; - 2000 Zwischen anderen Ereignissen, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig; – 1998 Powerless Structures, Fig 45, Reykjavik Art Museum Selected group shows : 2001 The 7th Istanbul Biennial; Inside Space, MIT List Visual Art Center, Cambridge, Neue Welt, Frankfurter Kunstverein – 2000 Manifesta3, Ljubljana; What If..., Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Sporting. Life, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney - 1999 Signs of Life, Melbourne Biennial, Extinction des Feux, Art & Public, Geneva;- 1998 Berlin/Berlin, 1st Berlin Biennial; Nuit Blanche, ARC, Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Junge Szene, Wiener Secession, Vienna, Nordic Nomads, White Columns, New York