

MARK MANDERS

February 17- March 24, 2007

Opening reception: Saturday February 17, 2007

Gallery one

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is very pleased to present its first major solo exhibition with Mark Manders. Comprised of sculpture, works on paper, and a slide projection, Manders has configured a dynamic selection of works that represent the core of his practice. Developed over twenty years as an endless self-portrait in the form of sculpture, still life, and architectural plans, and specifically referred to by the artist as his ongoing 'self-portrait as a building,' Manders' works present mysterious and evocative tableaux that leave narrative conclusions and associative meaning to the viewer. Initially inspired by an interest in writing and literature, Manders' first conception of the self-portrait was more literal, employing language and the written word to describe his own narrative in an autobiography. Even as literature, Manders' story would take an unorthodox form, as a novel with no beginning and no end. Remaining consistent with this formal concept, the transition to sculpture occurred as it became clear to Manders that words and language had certain basic limitations and narrowness of potential for dynamic meaning. At the same time, the architecture of the novel became more interesting as structure itself than for the specifics of content. Upon this conclusion, Manders practice of artmaking began and continues to serve as a never-ending process of growth and creation, with each new piece contributing and extending to the architecture of his overall body of work.

Though all of Manders' pieces make up a part of this ongoing project, each work is utterly individual and compellingly unique. In the front window façade of the gallery's ground floor space, Manders has papered over the glass with newsprint from papers the artist personally published, designed, and typeset. These newspapers figure strongly as a motif throughout the works and indeed exist as artworks in their own right. In one, the number five is the prevailing theme of the imprint – the randomly chosen words that make up the type are all of five letters, set in lines of five within columns of five. In the entrance of the main gallery, Manders presents the viewer with a spectacular, yet subtle still life, in the form of a black monochromatic landscape set behind thick non-reflective glass. Called 'Nocturnal City Scene' the visitor reads an alley-way at night, populated by a surreal selection of banal objects presented in groups of fives: tea cups, forks, dice, and with a nod to the play between visual and spoken language, five numerals representing the number 5. The arrangement seems to exist in an alternate universe, in a zone of timelessness, a million miles away – yet mere inches from the viewer. Clearly realized in three dimensions, Manders magically transforms this nightscape into an image, suggesting the simultaneously real yet abstract nature of still photography by limiting the viewers' perspective to a single plane.

In the main space, 'Finished Sentence' a work comprised of quasi-symmetrical lines and loops and is suggestive of a figure, city plan, building, electrical circuit, or a sentence, offering innumerable possibilities. Tea bags, fixed with tags individually offset printed by the artist to riff on the original Pickwick brand, serve as elements of language, characters, or fuel to sustain this 'machine for speaking, for language'. A large cone rises above and appears capable of projecting sound, ready, perhaps, to communicate the work's true purpose and meaning. As in the 'Nocturnal City Scene', a configuration of dark steel handmade chairs serves as the primary support for another large sculptural work in the main space called 'Unfinished Factory.' As a tall brick smokestack rises towards the ceiling, steel channels suggesting toy slides, or more industrial architectural plans run down towards the floor. As with 'Finished Sentence' ideas of process and potential are paramount. Enigmatic and provocative, the composition provides more evidence of Manders' exploitation of the infinite vocabulary of reality, employing readable images and objects as a poet uses words.

Living and working in The Netherlands and Belgium, Mark Manders exhibits widely both domestically and abroad. His upcoming solo exhibitions include, Kunsthhaus, Zurich, 2009; SMAK, Ghent, 2008; and Kunstverein, Hannover, 2007. Recent exhibitions include, *Short Sad Thoughts*, Baltic, Centre for Contemporary Art, Newcastle, Gateshead, UK, 2006 (solo); *Transforming Chronologies*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2006 (group); *We Humans are Free*, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, 2006 (group); among others.

Mark Manders' exhibition is made possible with generous financial contributions from the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam and The Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York.

For further information please contact Claire Pauley at 212-414-4144, or claire@tanyabonakdargallery.com.