

Jack STRANGE

Wallowing

19 June- 31 July, 2008

Gallery two

for immediate release

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is very pleased to present *Wallowing*, an exhibition of new work by Jack Strange. A recent graduate of The Slade School of Fine Art, London, this is the artist's first solo show with the gallery and in New York.

In his sculptures, drawings, collages and videos, Strange recontextualizes and re-imagines the functions of everyday objects and ideas in a manner that is humorous, clever, surprising and at times revelatory. Creating unexpected relationships between commonplace materials, Strange offers a perspective on their uses that can open up new worlds of meaning. A comparison to Surrealism might be appropriate based on this description, but the unusual juxtapositions in Strange's work are oddly comfortable, and somehow appropriate. While the viewer acknowledges the silliness of combining a lighting fixture and a coat hanger to make a face, as in "Another One Again," installed in the side gallery, the materials are easily recognizable in their new incarnation. Sometimes, in Strange's words, "the logic of no logic can be quite logical after all." With this sophisticated yet direct approach, Strange makes work that transforms the mundane into the marvelous while both formally and thematically addressing issues of creative identity, repetition, perspective, language, technology, biology and nature.

"Spunk" and "Distinguishing Feature" both installed in the gallery's entryway, offer an introduction to the natural or biological elements of Strange's work. The shapes that comprise "Spunk," a series of collages of white figures on black backgrounds, spaced evenly along the gallery's west wall, are reminiscent of Matisse, but actually represent patterns of ejaculation. "Distinguishing Feature," a small black mole, complete with two hairs, marks the opposing wall, making the expanse of white strangely figurative. "Sitka Spruce" a delicate drawing of a branch of pine needles and "Bling Head" a stick covered in Swarovski crystal, both installed in the side gallery, look more directly at nature, and specifically at trees—a recurrent source of interest for Strange. "Family Visit," also in the side gallery, is comprised of a series of three plinths, each with a neon expression and covered in stickers. The plinths sit "watching" monitors that repeat the same patterns found on the stickers with which they are covered, creating a kind of meditation on the act of observation, both observing and being observed.

"Pit of Despair" installed in the main gallery also addresses perspective and observation—an open top plinth houses a small sculptural ball of blu-tack at the bottom of an inverted quadrangle. The figurativeness of the blu-tack is suggested through a simple face, which seems surprised to find the viewer staring in. Simplicity of means and materials used to evocative ends likewise characterizes "G," a white laptop with a large ball of lead sitting on the "G" key, creating an endless string of the letter, which will continue until the laptop fails. The effect is ghostly and hypnotic. Like "G," "There is Always Wind in a Tree Somewhere Everyday All the Time" uses the repetition of language for visual effect, with each word on its own sheet of paper repeated in the cardinal directions, north, south, east, west across the page. "For The Greenmen (With The Cursr Sons, Alpha, Giovanni Manzini and Mr. Clack)" comprised of four monitors along the main gallery's east wall also uses repetition, but incorporates an audio element; looping an edited 90 second clip of Ang Lee's "Hulk" film, Strange sets the excerpt to four different soundtracks which he commissioned from musicians, including a 14 year old DJ, a classical pianist, a hillbilly rock group and an electronic noise artist.

Living and working in London, Jack Strange was included in *Took my hands off your eyes too soon*, a group show curated by Ryan Gander and shown at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in October of 2007. His work can currently be seen as part of *Past Forward*, a group exhibition curated by Vincent Honoré for the Zabłudowicz Collection at Projectspace 176, London, 15 May - 3 August, 2008. On July 17th Strange will curate an evening of performances for this exhibition.