



CLEARING

## **MY INTERESTS**

An exhibition of works by

**Sebastian Black**

September 7 – October 21, 2017

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**Date :** mardi 29 août 2017 à 19:32

**À :** Marwann Frikach - C L E A R I N G <tool@c-l-e-a-r-i-n-g.com>, C G <desk@c-l-e-a-r-i-n-g.com>

**Objet :** My Show

Hi Guys

Very much looking forward to seeing you all in a few short weeks. I'm getting excited thinking about how great this show is going to turn out in your beautiful new space. Also LODO, an early congratulations on your upcoming wedding!

I am touching base now to explain my concept of the show to you. Also to tell you that I will be shooting a video one afternoon during install and that this video will be an integral part of the exhibition. Finally, as this integral part will require a bit of your active participation I think it is only fair that I explain my thinking a bit. Basically I just really need the gallery to be behind me on this and to understand why it is important to the show.

The plan is that after we have decided on the paintings placement I'd like for us all to take turns being blindfolded and placing the title stickers on the backs of the paintings. Its a game like pin the tail on the donkey that I'll be filming on India's fancy cinema camera and the result will be projected in the back room on the left side. (See attached crude illustration)

As you know the titles of the works have become rather long. This show will feature some of the longest yet. Also they have become narratives of a sort. Therefore I call them Tales (like stories) which is of course a pun with Tails (like things that swing from animal asses). So, in the same way that the puppy painting turns the front side of the painting into a symbolic face the tale/tail turns the back side of the painting into a symbolic backside, a butt. The painting then becomes a symbolic whole- or as a butcher says, referring to a whole animal 'Nose to tail'. This is why my last show at CLEARING was called Tales I Knows, with that stubborn S at the end punning away.

Anyway, there are several things I like about this symbolic operation. First, I like that it makes explicit the kind of hazy dialectical allegory which hovers over the actual components of any painting where the front side, now the face, represents an idealistic space of pure aesthetics, divorced from the practical world; while the back, now the the ass, stands for precisely all those dirty doings which paradoxically makes such idealism possible. More simply put the front is the artist the back is the gallery. Second, I like that by showing the stickers in the video we subvert that romantic notion of painterly authorship by making the finishing touch on the work not my touch, the painter's touch (which by the way Duchamp lampooned as 'la patte', the Paw, as you French speakers know better than me) but your touch, the administrative touch of the gallerist.

## C L E A R I N G

What I'm interested in more generally, beyond just the onslaught of bad wordplay we can produce or enfold, is the idea that through our game we introduce a kind of excess, into this back-side of painting. Many of the exemplary gestures of institutional critique- the subgenre most associated with this back side of the art world - have involved subtracting something, have used negation. Think of Broodthaers sealing his poetry book in plaster so it can't be read, or Asher subtracting a portion of the gallery wall, or any number of artists removing a whole show from circulation by shuttering the venue.

This has been the maneuver so commonly deployed that these days negation and critique have become nearly interchangeable concepts. Contra this paradigm, this show seeks a new way to address this backside of art which is additive or positive. Rather than remove a wall to show the office, the titles are lengthened until the office becomes conspicuous through the bulging size of the checklist (which will be available on a table near the door). Rather than pare away the front of the painting until only a slick monochrome-y surface remains (the favorite trope of so much contemporary «critical» painting) the video documentation of our game makes the back of the painting sensible; adds another space of play.

These ideas obviously can be put into writing that becomes a press release or a wall text or an extremely longwinded email... That is where ideas in an art show always appear to settle, in black and white, in written words, somewhere off to the side of the artworks they address. Yet we know that this isn't really true. We know that ideas in an art show are actually encased in the artistic material that comprises the show and that text - if its accurate - is merely one more form for their articulation. What I like about the Puppy Tale format for writing the titles is that it points to a relationship between image and text which has no hierarchy. The text doesn't describe the image, it doesn't serve as a caption or an interpretation. Rather the text of a puppy tale, produces the drawing of the puppy, and the puppy it produces is its *raison d'être*. Similarly the video and the checklist will not describe the process of titling but will manifest it within in the space of the exhibition, and in the material bodies of the paintings themselves.

So the exhibition ultimately comprises 3 analogous parts which all work together. These are the paintings, the checklist, and the video.

Ok I'll stop now.

Marwann lets be in touch about specifics for screening the video.

Love to all

S

Sent from my iPhone