

PRESS RELEASE

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PAVEL BÜCHLER – L'IMITATION

7 February – 21 March, 2009

PREVIEW Friday 6 February, 6 – 9pm

BREAKFAST WITH THE ARTIST Sunday 8 February, 11 – 12am

Pavel Büchler in conversation with Nick Crowe (artist based in Berlin,
professor at Goldsmiths College, London)

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Tanya Leighton Gallery is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in Germany by Czech-born artist Pavel Büchler. L'imitation is part of 'Forum Expanded' – a programme within the International Forum of New Cinema at the 59th International Film Festival of Berlin.

Summing up his own practice as 'making nothing happen', Pavel Büchler is committed to the catalytic nature of art – its potential to draw attention to the obvious and reveal it as strange. Formally presented in a variety of media with a bias towards obsolete technology, his works often reference modern art, literature, critical thought – and on this occasion specifically the cinema. These references are never direct quotations, nor does the work rely solely on them. As observations on the conditions of culture and its inevitable dependence on the possibilities opened up by history, they try to offer new starting points from which imagination may proceed towards uncertain destinations.

The tiny drawing of the word 'l'imitation' meticulously rendered in 'French pen' to resemble print, for instance, is a misquotation of the English word 'limitation', chanced upon while reading an essay on Marcel Broodthaers. The same source has also inspired the calligraphic reworking of the phrase 'the impact of industrial production upon artistic practice', titled self-mockingly The Idea Crossed My Mind and I Set to Work at Once.

In Hot Air (Projet pour une idée), Büchler again acknowledges his debt to Broodthaers, and simultaneously Broodthaers' own fascination with René

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Magritte, while using both as departure points for a speculation on perception and imagination. He creates a simple cinematic effect; the hot air rising from a slide projector placed in front of a screen illuminated by another projector appears animated like smoke. The image is as much an allusion to Magritte's 'pipe' as it is an oblique reference to Broodthaers' films and his passion for smoking (which Büchler, an unrepentant chain smoker, shares). Equally, the image can be a reminder of the 1970s' pioneer of American experimental cinema, Hollis Frampton, who famously demonstrated the essence of cinema, 'the rectangle of projected light', by inserting a pipe cleaner into the gate of a projector.

The wooden stools used in the installation make something of a respectful nod to the first ready made of Marcel Duchamp, while the reference to 'Kos(s)uth' seems playfully mischievous: a crumpled packet from a popular Hungarian cigarette brand, placed under one of the stool's legs as if to stabilise it. Elsewhere, some of the founding fathers of conceptual art are mentioned in a pedantically detailed title of a work, After Joseph Kosuth, after Douglas Huebler, after Lawrence Weiner ... , Artforum, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1997, page 16 without giving any clues as to the semantic mismatch between the cited phrase and the medium: the words, 'no forms or colors' are painted in watercolour on the gallery wall from a photocopy of the magazine article enlarged to a cinematic scale.

A large, battered, 'reflex horn' loudspeaker mounted on an old painting studio stool, brings Duchamp on a collision course with James Joyce. The work's title Bloom Stool is a reference to the (in)famous 'bowel movement passage' in Ulysses. The sound, a recording of a 'waterfall' (flushing toilet) slowed down beyond recognition is played from a journalist's portable tape recorder, with the tape looped around one of the stool's legs, mirroring the newspaper featured in Joyce's account. The result, however, leaves the relevance of such references entirely open.

The investment of skill in Büchler's drawings is often shown as futile labour. The drawings of hand gestures on carbonless copy paper, reminiscent of animation cels, will deteriorate and in time disappear, or in a series taken from photographs of prominent 1960's artists and thinkers, including Godard, each with a trademark cigarette, the drawing method evokes the spirit and iconography of its time but threatens the drawings' survival. They are drawn with clear acid and rendered visible by the heat of the artist's own cigarette. Other works achieve the effect of scale by the most economical means. Two or three stills from a film are reanimated on a video monitor into a violent dramatic action or a meteorite from a tourist souvenir shop is inserted into the lens of a projector in such a way that its shadow in the projected circle of light creates an image of a planetary eclipse (with a

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subtle reference to the 'cosmic consciousness' of the 1970s 'expanded cinema'). In yet other works - a found and framed copy of an art magazine with part of the front cover cut off by a bookshop manager creating an instantaneous semantic short circuit or a soundtrack from a well known film played out of sight - any evidence of labour is absent. Ultimately, Büchler provokes the question of the nature of creative labour in his most up to date work - a sequence of photographs taken during his cigarette breaks while installing the exhibition. The piece is titled Work.

Pavel Büchler is a Czech-born, UK-based artist, influential teacher and occasional writer. Büchler belongs to a generation of artists directly influenced by the discoveries of 1970s conceptual art - or, as he insists, by the creative misunderstandings that conceptual art suffered in translation to the Eastern European cultural and political context. Recent solo exhibitions include Max Wigram, London (2009), Sleeper, Edinburgh (2008), annex14, Bern (2007), Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2007), objectif_exhibitions/MuHKA, Antwerp, (2007), Kunsthalle Bern (2006), Goethe Institut, Dublin (2006). He has recently participated in Frieze projects (new commission, 2008), Whatever Happened to Social Democracy? (co-curated with Charles Esche, Rooseum, Malmö, 2005), Off-Key, Kunsthalle Bern (2005), the 9th Istanbul Biennial (2005), The Grand Promenade, National Museum of Modern Art, Athens (2006), Involved, Shangart Gallery, Shanghai (2008), and other group exhibitions in the UK and Europe. A new monograph on his work, Absentmindedwindowgazing, was published in Summer 2007 (Veenman Publishers, Rotterdam).

With special thanks to Arsenal - Institute for Film and Video Art e.V., Henriette Huldish, and Penny Rafferty.

An illustrated catalogue for 'Forum Expanded' will be available at the gallery. For more information and images contact info@tanyaleighton.com or call +49 (0)30 221607770.

Gallery open Wednesday - Saturday 12-6pm and by appointment.

Extended opening hours during 'Forum Expanded':

Saturday 7 February, 11-6. Sunday 8 February, 11-1

Monday 9 February, 12-4. Tuesday 10 February, 12-4. Wednesday 11 February, 11-6

Thursday 12 February, 11-6. Friday 13 February, 11-6

Saturday 14 February, 11-6. Sunday 15 February, 12-4

