

Murray Guy

453 West 17 Street New York NY 10011 T: 212 463 7372 F: 212 463 7319 info@murrayguy.com

MATTHEW BUCKINGHAM

Likeness

6 November — 23 December 2010

Opening Saturday, 6 November, 6 — 8pm



Murray Guy is very pleased to announce our sixth solo exhibition with Matthew Buckingham, comprising two new film installations that examine the nature of portraiture.

Successful portraits deliberately confuse the person they portray with an image of that person, producing a "likeness" which fulfills the proposition, "This is Ms. or Mr. X." The two-dimensional surface of the painting generates and reflects a network of gazes: the subject of the portrait looks at the artist; the artist returns the sitter's gaze; the painted portrait "stares" at the viewer; and finally the viewer returns the portrait's "gaze." The finished picture compresses the time used to produce the image into the illusion of a single moment, which aligns the sitter's "present" with our own. What is depicted in a portrait is less an idealized person and more an idealization of time.

Projected amidst pieces of furniture that have been wrapped in moving blankets, *Likeness* (2009) appears as though discovered in a temporary holding space or a warehouse for the transit of personal effects. The film refers to a 1659 portrait by Diego Velazquez of the child-prince of Asturias, Felipe Prospero. But rather than showing the sitter, it links together a variety of reproductions of a detail from the painting: a small dog, lying in a chair, gazing directly at the viewer. A voiceover addresses the young prince, unpacking the dense network of relationships (both human and animal) out of which the portrait is quite literally constructed. *Likeness* conceives of portraiture as a mode of conceptual painting, one which asks who or what can be a subject, and why we do so actively project onto images, imagining that they "hail" our attention?

Caterina van Hemessen is 20 Years Old (2009) takes as its origin a 1548 self-portrait by the painter Caterina van Hemessen, which is considered the first known self-portrait of an artist depicted working at an easel. The installation is comprised of a 16mm film—bounced off of a mirror and across the gallery onto a freestanding screen—and a series of framed texts. The film shows enlarged fragments of the portrait, replacing the original whole of the painting with a representation of the activity of looking (as the viewer's eye might shift from detail to detail.) The texts appear illegible at first, but are in fact printed in reverse and can be deciphered using small hand mirrors, revealing a series of written "reflections." The installation places us where van Hemessen stood in relation to her own image; *reflected* within the perspective of the present, her image hails the viewer and synchronizes, for a moment, our time with hers.

Matthew Buckingham (b. 1963 Nevada, Iowa) was recently the subject of an expansive survey at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, organized by Lynne Cooke. He will have solo exhibitions in 2012 and 2013 at The Power Plant, Toronto, and Wiels Center for Contemporary Art, Brussels. Other recent solo exhibitions include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2009); Index, Stockholm (2008); the Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum fuer Gegenwart, Berlin (2007); and Camden Arts Centre, London (2007). His work is currently on view in *Between Here and There: Passages in Contemporary Photography*, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Concurrently with this exhibition, a show of Buckingham's films and sculptures is on view at Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf, through 27 November.

Please contact the gallery at 212.463.7372 or info@murrayguy.com for more information or images.