

FIA BACKSTRÖM

CHRISTIAN PHILIPP MÜLLER

8 January — 19 February 2011

Opening Saturday, 8 January, 6 — 8pm

Friday, 14 January, 6:30pm: Performance by Christian Philipp Müller at 1OAK

Murray Guy is very pleased to announce two exhibitions, by Fia Backström and Christian Philipp Müller, opening on Saturday, January 8. Both artists share an interest in reflecting on structures of authority and circulation, re-configuring processes by which information is made to take on a physical form. Each prowls for ways to conceive of representation and speech at a time when the categories of public and private or real and virtual seem entirely supplanted by the complexity of modern living.

31 in Chelsea

"During the past few years Chelsea became a one-stop shopping destination for high-style contemporary architecture as well as high-end art, and the results can be depressing. For every significant building that went up, the neighborhood seemed to produce a half-dozen or so inferior knockoffs. The feeling on the streets now is the same as it is in most of the galleries: the sheer amount of work, and the mediocrity of most of it, can make the effort of sorting out the good from the bad too painful to contemplate."¹

Christian Philipp Müller's "31 in Chelsea" takes up the rapidly changing neighborhood where Murray Guy has been located since its establishment in 1998. This new work builds on two previous projects: *Interpellations*, presented in 1994 at American Fine Arts Co. in Soho, in which Müller inserted mock entries for the art gallery into New York travel guides, and *Around the Corner*, conceived in 2006 at Orchard on New York's Lower East Side, during which he offered a series of guided walking tours of the gallery's environs. In both of these works, Müller staged a cluster of relations between specific art galleries and broader neighborhoods and inhabitants, coordinating "disconnected times and spaces to bring the contradictions of the present into a sharper focus."²

Müller's new project examines the structure of an urban neighborhood at a time when the very concept of a neighborhood—whose components are defined by their geographic proximity—is itself being rapidly reshaped by new forms of communication, exchange, and circulation. Beginning with the question "What is Chelsea?", Müller has arranged 31 visits and conversations with a broad cross section of Chelsea residents, organizations, and businesses. Not programmed by any overall sociological or demographic strategy, his visits comprise a sort of *derivé*, where one encounter leads to another. These range from the Hudson Guild Senior Center to the Gay Men's Health Crisis, a nightclub promoter, an executive at Google, a painter, and a restaurant owner, to name but a few.

Müller will use the gallery to stage the traces from his visits, organizing this archive into 31 boxes (one for each day of the show), which will confront the viewer as a hybrid between a portrait, a map and a calendar. On January 14 at 6:30pm, he will gather his collected material into a performance, to be presented at the nightclub 1OAK, which has been located for the past 3 years in a lavishly renovated space below Murray Guy.

Müller's attempt to represent an expansive neighborhood like Chelsea over 31 days in a commercial art gallery involves a degree of absurdity, within which we might locate a space for reflecting on the gallery's relations to its surroundings and to its audiences, relationships which involve different registers of visibility and invisibility, connection and "autonomy."

¹ Nicolai Ouroussoff, "At the Corner of Grit and Glamour," *The New York Times*, March 12, 2010

² Miwon Kwon, "Unfixing Values" (2007)

Christian Philipp Müller (b. 1957 Biel, Switzerland) has exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad. Major projects include *Fixed Values* at the Palais de Beaux-Arts, Brussels (1991), *A Sense of Friendliness, Mellowness, Permanence* at American Fine Arts Co., New York (1992), *Green Border*, Austrian Pavillion, 45th Venice Biennale (1993), *Interpellations*, American Fine Arts Co, New York (1994), *A Balancing Act*, Documenta X, Kassel (1997), *Hudson Valley Tastemakers*, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson (2003-present), and *Apollo Soyuz*, Manifesta 7 (2008). From 2006-2008, Müller was a partner in the collaborative gallery Orchard, where he organized the exhibitions *Around the Corner* (2006) and *Cookie Cutter* (2008). In 2007, he was the subject of a major retrospective at the Kunstmuseum Basel, which coincided with the publication of a monograph on his work by Hatje Cantz.

31 IN CHELSEA
Christian Philipp Müller

1	Public relations	Eden Grimaldi, Mediacraft	17 St / 10 Ave
2	Senior center	Yehudit Moch, Hudson Guild Senior Center	17-18 Sts / 9 Ave
3	Restaurant	Melva Max, La Lunchonette	18-19 Sts / 10 Ave
4	Bed & Breakfast	Tony, The Colonial House	22 St / 8 Ave
5	Stationary	Eliho Matz, Boro Art & Stationary	15 St / 8 Ave
6	Health	Krishna Stone, Gay Men's Health Crisis	24 St / 6-7 Aves
7	Bookstore	Max Schumann & Katherine Crudy, Printed Matter	21-22 Sts / 10 Ave
8	Art collector	Joshua Mack	21 St / 9-10 Aves
9	Artist	Richard Phillips	26 St / 11-12 Aves
10	Clothing store	Norman Uciak, Camouflage	17 St / 8 Ave
11	Art foundation	Karen Kelly, DIA	22 St / 10-11 Aves
12	Artist	Ethan Breckenridge	18 St / 6-7 Aves
13	Home	Willie and Jeremy and Baby Eli	20 St / 9 Ave
14	Performance	Debra Singer, The Kitchen	19 St / 10-11 Aves
15	Catering	Mary Cleaver, Cleaver Company, Chelsea Market	15 St / 9-10 Aves
16	Academic	Kathy Battista, Sotheby's Institute	23 St / 9-10 Aves
17	Nightclub	Scott Sartiano, 1 OAK	17 St / 10 Ave
18	Nightclub promoter	Patrick Duffy, B.E.S. Restaurant	22 St / 10-11 Aves
19	Writer	Linda Yablonsky	25 St / 10 Ave
20	Superstar	Ultra Violet, Warhol Chelsea Girl	26 St / 10-11 Aves
21	Gallery	Paula Cooper, Paula Cooper Gallery	21 St / 10-11 Aves
22	School	Vice-Principal Mister Sharky, Liberty High School	18 St / 7-8 Aves
23	Writer	Wayne Koestenbaum	18 St / 8-9 Aves
24	Seminary	Bruce Parker, Episcopal Theological Seminary	23 St / 10 Ave
25	Public park	Joshua David, The High Line	20 St / 10-11 Aves
26	Gallery	Janice and Margaret, Murray Guy	17 St / 10 Ave
27	Media & Technology	Paul Frantz, Google	16 St / 9 Ave
28	Gallery Developer	Grunert & Gasser, Shigeru Ban House	19 St / 10-11 Aves
29	Curator	Sabine Breitwieser	29 St / 11 Ave
30	Photographer	Neil Selkirk	19 St / 10 -11 Aves
31	Architect	Annabelle Selldorf	17 St / Union Square