

Murray Guy

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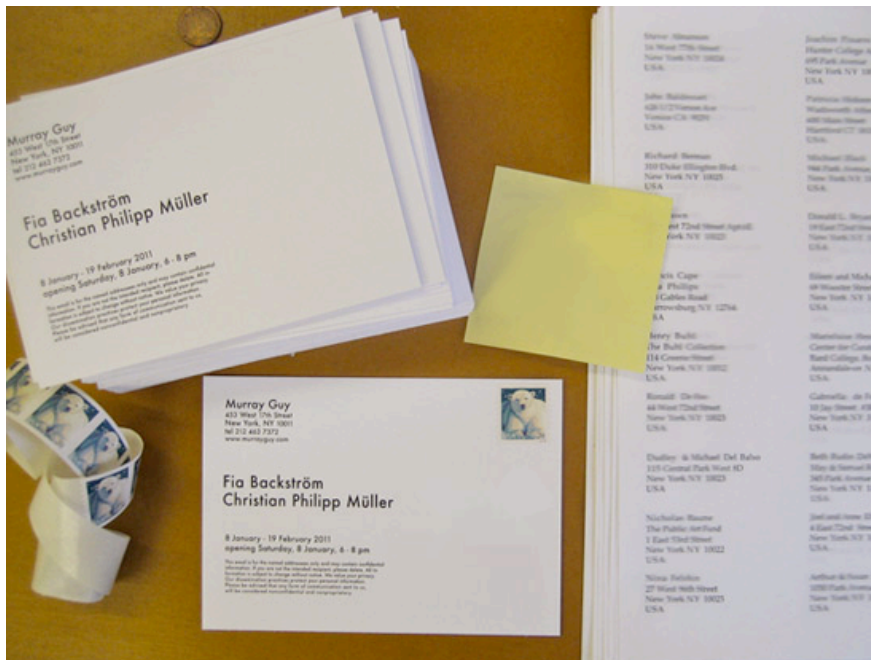
FIA BACKSTRÖM

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.

Ambien® Social Support — five ways of authenticating address

Fia Backström will install an arrangement of displays and screens which ask the viewer to imagine how value, authorship and agency might be produced within a shifting set of relations between context and content. As in many of her previous works, for instance *Herd Instinct 360°*, a working-through of formats for collectivity, or *Studies in Leadership*, a multi-part exhibition that examined models of leadership and authority, Backström will create an environment that encourages the viewer to reflect on various modes of rhetorical address and their multifarious visual forms.

"How to move beyond the old new, the new old mood?"

Each element in Backström's installation communicates to the viewer by enacting a set of displacements or translations: Short verse printed on aluminum plaques seems to produce a feeling of meaning out of a recycled familiarity. The text evokes HSBC's "Different Values" advertising campaign or the 140-character Tweet or "status update," but without shifters such as "we" or "you," the plaques

disrupt any imagined intimacy. Wooden furniture—a bench, a bar, a wall segment—expands upon the existing wainscoting beneath the gallery's windows, recalling the socially designed atmospheres (inseparable from social media) of countless Brooklyn restaurants or bars, which transport a sense of legitimization to the rapidly gentrifying frontier. Linen curtains reproduce the design templates of Facebook and YouTube, configuring them as ambient backdrops while emptying out their collective threads. Reflective aluminum display systems present digital images—a computer keyboard, glass curtain walls, an image of the CEO of Toyota publicly apologizing—as though they were movable slats in a window blind.

"A nocturnal ambience in aluminum. A rustic atmosphere of wainscoted woodwork. The patina of contemporary gentrification strategies, handling antiquity in an air of frontier 'always-been-there.'"

Backström's environment seems at once to address the viewer intimately and at a distance, replacing the invitation to participate—"What's on your mind...?"—with the prompt—"Who's asking, and why?" Creating a fragmented interface or a layered display, she configures advertising language, affective solicitations and propaganda into a disorienting scaffolding in which to trace circulations of power and authority.

"In an instant temporality soup, 'we's and 'us's slowly oscillate past OurSpace, rhyming to another rhythm to shift the gear from peer to peer."

Fia Backström (b. 1970 Stockholm, Sweden) will represent Sweden at the 2011 Venice Biennale. She recently presented a project at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Misty Harbor – At Your Leisure*, which was commissioned as part of the museum's *Nine Screens* program, and her installation *The Worker Through the Ages* is currently on view at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Recent solo exhibitions and projects include the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2009); the ICA, London (2009), and White Columns, New York (2008). She was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. Backström is also a prolific writer, whose many essays and interviews with other artists have been published in *Artforum*, *Modern Painters*, *North Drive Press*, *Pacemaker* and *Art on Paper*, among many others.

With thanks to the Consulate General of Sweden in New York for their generous support of this exhibition.