

Rowley Kennerk Gallery is pleased to present David Lieske's "il mio solo idolo e la realta" (room I + II). This is Lieske's first U.S. solo exhibition. Lieske has participated in numerous museum exhibitions, including, "Formalismus. Moderne Kunst, heute" at the Kunstverein in Hamburg, "It takes some time to open an oyster" at the Centre Cultural Andratx in Mallorca, and "Don Quijote" at Witte de With in Rotterdam. Lieske was the 2005/06 recipient of the Jürgen Ponto-Stiftung prize.

DAVID LIESKE INTERVIEW

03.09.07

ROWLEY KENNERK: Your work appears to be invested in notions of production, whether it be the the approach to making artworks, the actual objects themselves, and/or how they might be interpreted. Is this accurate? Does this relate to the current exhibition?

DAVID LIESKE: With the work "“PRODUCTION, NOUN. 1 THE ACTION OF PRODUCING OR THE PROCESS OF BEING PRODUCED. 2. THE AMOUNT OF SOMETHING PRODUCED 3. A FILM, RECORD OR PLAY, VIEWED IN TERMS OF ITS MAKING OR STAGING.” I try to question the decisiveness in my own work, in general, and to introduce the scenario of coincidence and misunderstanding. Many of my works are actually based in coincidental decisions or events. Through the practice of making quick decisions and the decision not to conduct extensive research there are certain obscurities that are gained, which I like. The two shows at your gallery "il mio solo idolo e la realta" room I+II are, for example, a further development of a contribution that I had originally made for the group show "The Metaphysics of Youth," which took place in Pescara Italy last summer. For this exhibition I had to develop an installation for two rooms in a limited amount of time because of a transport problem. The image of Howard Harrison's lighting equipment I used for the film originated in a book that I accidentally had with me, because I bought it a couple days after a show in Rotterdam in a flea market. I borrowed the aphorism written on the wall in the second room from the back cover of an Italian fanzine on Piero Paolo Pasolini that I got as a gift from a bookstore in Italy. On this fanzine I also found a reproduction next to the sentence of a photo by the American photographer Lynn Goldsmith, which portrayed Patti Smith in front of Pasolini graffiti.

RK: You appear to re-use works that were in previous exhibitions. Why?

DL: In the past, I used to refer, or even use, older works especially in the context of institutional group exhibitions to avoid in a way the curatorial requirements to put coordinates such as, context, space, subject matter into thought. It was not about believing in a great chance of hermetics, it was more about gaining space for potential of all kinds and to reduce the moment of reactiviness to a minimum. Repeating something that has been said before to gain time, so to speak. Working self-referentially also means to purposely complicate the readability of my works. To refuse obedience for my work to function under the conditions of the "illusive gaze".

RK: You have an interest in archetypal structures, as in the case of your reference to classical Greek philosophy, mythology, and Carl Jung's "Septem Sermones ad Mortuos." This interest is balanced, or elaborated, with your use of other cultural references, like snuff films, "Six Feet Under," etc. Could you talk about these references and their relationship to one another?

DL: As I said before, coincidence is very relevant in the choice of my references. But coincidence is a cipher for an conscious and unconscious preference system that frames certain events and encounters that could occur. (Rarely beyond this because this would mean real coincidence which existence has yet to be proved) I would say that this system is a combination of conscious decisions that construct the several identities of a person as also collective processes of accumulation of value in all areas. As a matter of principle I preferred to use references that can be broken down to a linguistic formula in the past. For the Greek myths of Atlantis, for example, I was interested in the isolated formula of Plato's student Aristotle, "He who invented it also destroyed it," in which he manages to explain and destroy the remarkable invention of a rhetorical figure to solve any kind of credibility problem of his teacher (namely the myth of atlantis).

RK: You also run a record label called DIAL Records. Is this part of your artistic practice or is the music separate?

DL: I would rather see DIAL as something separate from my practice as an artist, in which electronic music has not played a role until today. But, I have to say that I don't really manage to camouflage my function as the operator of a record label, as compared to other people who do it quite well. You could say that I stopped all ambitions in this direction, more or less. My own preference system leaves an unfiltered traces also on DIAL. In the first place in the choice of the musicians and also in the visual appearance of the label. But you have to keep in mind that I'm not the only one who makes decision for the label, because there is at least three other individuals involved. The only thing I really try to avoid is cross-over experiments of any kind. For example, techno music in a museum is something I could hardly bear. DIAL is a techno label that keeps its eye on its employment in the context of clubs and nightlife. The selection of the covers images transport individual additional information that has been chosen by the musicians and the label operators which has to be negotiated for each record release. As a matter of fact, the images used for the covers are often reproductions of artworks because they seem to be suited very well for the visual communication of general cultural and political positions, attitudes, and lifestyle choices. Sometimes this leads to problems of intermediation of both the artistic and musical context. We as the operators try to respond to this from time to time at different levels.

RK: The 16mm film was originally in DVD format, could you explain why you decided to change the format?

DL: During the preparation of the exhibition "THEN IT BEGAN TO FLOW OUT OF ME AND IN THE COURSE OF THREE EVENINGS THE THING WAS WRITTEN. AS SOON AS I TOOK UP THE PEN, THE WHOLE GHOSTLY ASSEMBLAGE EVAPORATED. THE ROOM QUIETENED AND THE ATMOSPHERE CLEARED. THE HAUNTING WAS OVER.", within i exhibited a recording of speech and I started to think about the deficits of digital mediums of memory, such as audio cd's, dvd's,

blue-ray, etc., as artworks. In the first place, I thought about the direct problem of the relative insecurity of their own half-life in relation to their actual usability, and then about the fact that these formats don't really qualify themselves for a personal fetishization as books, couture-clothes, artworks, automobiles, or records do. Otherwise, I'm not really interested in nostalgia. Which leads me to an apparently unsolvable problem that I try to contrast with a personal prescription to the now in any other possible way. In the case of the film, "Il mio solo idolo e la realta (Howard Harrison)", in which the problems of image transfers of something I would call a "light programmatic." is put into place, I thought it would be very productive to use the format of the projector because it's resemblance to a lamp is incredibly plausible. That I did not do this before has the cause and effect that in the short time realizing the work in Italy it was simply impossible. For this reason, the status of this film as a DVD did not have the same status of a commodity, until now (I did not want the DVD to be a finished work of art).

RK: You use light and reference light designers in this exhibition. Are you interested in light as a metaphor?

DL: I am not really interested in light as a metaphor, in general, you could say that I'm interested in the application of a certain type of light, as a metaphor, so to say light as practice or expression. Therefore, I try to focus on the decisions of a certain source of light within the context of an artistic production, or a gesture of lifestyle and the denotation that these choices could probably have implied. The use of the past tense (of implied), in this case, is essential because it eludes to the actual problem of the historical reproduction of a programmatic light source decision. It is the problem of the presentability of attitude that interests me in both parts of the show.

RK: There will be two separate shows, or "rooms," for this exhibition. Are they the same artwork or two different artworks?

DL: The structure of two separate rooms refer to the structure of the original installation. Because the gallery only offers one room the idea came up to simulate the two rooms through two individual exhibitions after one another. Even if the two rooms are closely connected, content wise, they still include individual works that can be considered separate.

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