

Press Release

Phillip Lai

20 November through to 19 December, 2009

Private view Thursday 19 November, 6pm – 8pm

Stuart Shave/Modern Art is proud to present an exhibition of new work by Phillip Lai, his third solo show with Modern Art.

Phillip Lai has created an exhibition of wide sculptural approaches, altogether composed of analogies and associations: sometimes formal, sometimes of context, sometimes of experience.

From anecdotal and private moments of discovery in the day-to-day world, Lai generates and organises sets of ideas. These coalesce into particular forms and identify themselves with certain objects. Mentally or psychologically essentialising an idea's form, he works to reconstitute it by making and assembling his materials from the ground up. Rather than a paring back of found form, Lai's is a building up of bare and base material to a point where some thing, or some situation, is proposed scenically. He exaggerates something simple, and puts it forward as a whole world: a scenic beginning point, on the cusp of a slight fiction.

Throughout Lai's show at Modern Art is a motif of transiently inhabited space. Things are remade by the artist in his ongoing attention to human aspects of exchange and utility: the outline of a shop, the interior of a van, a domestic stairwell, a pair of trousers, for example. The presence and role of a socialised human body is suggested through Lai's essential reconstitutions of spaces which operate as facilities for glamourless manual action. His sculptures notionally reconstruct situations, celebrating and debasing an ideal form in order to communicate it.

The diversity of sculptural approach is lent from a range of materials which may seem unexpected, but which nevertheless remain appropriate to the forms they describe. The bare description of Lai's shop, for instance, is rendered spatially with lengths of commercially available aluminium sections, supported on a meagre foundation of fruit stones. Another sculpture depicts wine bottles, balls, and baseball bats, crudely remade by the artist in sponge foam – redirecting their outward appearance to that of slightly comic substitutes. Distinctly not monumental, Lai's works accept that they somehow 'live for others'. There is an absorbed mental transference or displacement of materials and properties, in order to fully comprehend or make sense of aesthetic form.

Phillip Lai was born in Kuala Lumpur in 1969, and lives and works in London. Lai undertook both BA and MA Fine Art degrees at Chelsea School of Art & Design, completing his studies in 1994. In 1997, he presented his first solo exhibition at The Showroom, one of London's most vital contemporary art institutions. Lai has made individual exhibitions with Modern Art at the gallery's two previous locations on Redchurch Street and Vyner Street: first in 2000 with *His Divine Grace*, and again in 2007 with *Free to Meet for Coffee Sometime Soon*. Other solo exhibitions include Galleria Franco Noero, Turin (2007), and Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, Berlin (2009).

For more information, please contact Ryan Moore at Stuart Shave/Modern Art: ryan@modernart.net

Visitor Information:

Address: 23/25 Eastcastle Street, London W1W 8DF

Opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday 11am-6pm

Admission: Free

Nearest tube station: Oxford Circus

Contact telephone: +44 (0) 207 299 7950

Contact email: info@modernart.net

Website: www.modernart.net

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Phillip Lai
Special
2000
cast urethane rubber
65cm diameter, 16cm depth
MA-LAIPH-00006



Phillip Lai
Untitled (spiral)
2008
aluminium tube, spiral duct, clamps, plastic, tubing, air
300x92x92 cm, 118.1x36.2x36.2 ins in 2 parts
299 x 91 x 77cm
121 x 40 x 44cm
MA-LAIPH-00061