

# DROP HANDKERCHIEF BACKDROP

01/04 – 08/05/2011

Group show:

Vanessa Billy, Georges Braque, David Keating, Christian Tonner

Until the middle of the last century it was not known what actually caused cavities in teeth. In Sweden it was a widespread problem, and in the 1940s as many as 99,9 % of the military conscripts had cavities. Though it was suspected that sugar played an important role, it was not yet scientifically confirmed.

As a countermeasure the government established The National Dental Service in 1945, and a set of experiments were initiated to root out any uncertainty. The location was Vipeholm Mental Hospital, housing several hundred patients that were to become part of the largest human experiment ever conducted in Sweden. The key element was to replace their regular meals with candy. Over the course of several years the patients were fed copious amounts of candy and caramel, and some were even allowed and encouraged to eat as much as they wanted at any time of the day.

The experiment was a huge success, and eventually led to a full understanding of the effect of sugar on teeth. Furthermore it prompted a concise formula of the necessary elements in the formation of dental caries, namely the inclusion of:

- Sugar
- Bacteria
- Time
- Teeth

By removing any of these four components you will not form cavities. (Cavities are usually understood as negative space, but are in reality soft spots on the teeth.)

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Vanessa Billy contributes two recent sculptures. David Keating and Christian Tonner present commissioned work and have been instrumental in developing the backdrop for the show – following preset outlines. In no order: Perspex sheet covered with Vaseline, propped up by concrete / wall-mounted mirror foil with SAAB Force Protection multispectral Winter Camouflage Net / partially spray painted polystyrol-hardfoam and Michael Jackson's torso / carpet sculpture / trash can with elevated water / three steel vitrines with painted rope (looping lyrically), transparent, larger than preceding work / autostereogram – internal image (to overcome focus and vergence: the simultaneous movement of the pupils) / two jackets (zip-locked).

Two half a century old works by Georges Braque, were made on the initiative of the Maeght gallery, the artist's longtime supporters, at the very end of his career. Severely wounded in WWI, Braque remained a productive painter for the rest of his life, ever faithful to the ideas of Cubism. In one print two birds soar through blue skies, with the ageing artist presenting his best wishes for 1960.

#### About the artists:

Vanessa Billy (born 1978, Geneva) lives in Zurich and London. Recent exhibitions include *Three Times a Day*, Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel (2011); *Natural Means Something Like Vegetables*, Galleri Christina Wilson, Copenhagen (2011); *What Shapes What*, Limoncello, London (2010); *Surfaces for the Mind to Rest or Sink Into*, The Photographer's Gallery, London (2009); *stream, river, lake, river, stream*, BolteLang, Zurich (2009), as well as international group shows.

Georges Braque (born 1882, Argenteuil; died 1963, Paris) was a major 20th century French painter and sculptor who, in close collaboration with Pablo Picasso, developed the art movement known as Cubism. Braque remained strongly committed to the cubist method of simultaneous perspective and fragmentation, producing a considerable number of paintings, graphic prints and sculptures. Braque's work can be found in most major museums throughout the world.

David Keating (born 1977, Melbourne) is a Berlin-based artist whose solo exhibitions include *Sequence and Descending*, RaebervonStenglin, Zurich (2010); *I like for you to be still*, The Taut and Tame, Berlin (2010); and *In Division*, Koh-9-noor, Copenhagen (2008). His group exhibitions include *Brussels Biennial I* (2008) and *Tales from The Travel Journal*, CAC Vilnius (2006).

Christian Tonner (born 1977, Detmold) lives and works in Berlin. His exhibitions includes *Springexhibition*, Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2011); *KOH-I-NOHR*, Den Frie, Copenhagen (2011); *Mulhouse Biennale 010*, Mulhouse France (2010); *Kabul – Mauritius Kunstverein Mauritius*, Gallery Oranienstrasse 46, Berlin (2010); *The KVM Office*, Artforum Berlin (2009); *Dude, where's my career?* Portikus, Frankfurt a.M. (2009); *I Love Palms*, Limoncello Gallery, London (2008).