

GUILLAUME LEBLON THE PERSONAL EFFECTS OF SURYAVARMAN VII

Opening Friday, March 9, 2007, 6pm - 9pm

Exhibition March 10 - April 21, 2007

Opening hours Tue - Sat 11am-6pm

We are proud to present the French artist Guillaume Leblon (*1971) with his first solo exhibition in our gallery.

The work of Guillaume Leblon consistently interrogates the interrelation between the internal and the external and between form and content. His objects and installations are paradoxical reconstructions from both life and art. In the exhibition *The personal effects of Suryavarman VII*, the artist's precise choice of material and his equally precise use of it, functions as a means to circumscribe that which is no longer visible and inaccessible.

The exhibition's guideline is the title of a book by the Swedish writer Stig Dagerman: *Our need for consolation is insatiable*. The impossibility to succeed in reaching an aim is the tune pervading the entire exhibition. Several of the works on display were created through a process of physical transformation effected by heat. Like an alchemist, Guillaume Leblon exposes his materials to a chain of alterations in order to find the elixir of life – and demonstrates simultaneously the failure of such attempt.

Right in the middle of the room, a wall of bricks has been erected, some of which have the shape of letters and formulate the sentence *notre besoin de consolation est impossible a rassasier* – the French translation of *Our need for consolation is insatiable*. Fog seeps through the walls of the room, together with the loss of certainty that the separation between inside and outside exists. Carrying the title *Landscape*, the work turns architecture into nature and allows the exterior to penetrate a built space. Continuing one's way through the exhibition, the visitor encounters a conglomeration of metal shelves, which might once have served as storage for someone's personal belongings. Having been exposed to extreme heat, the shelves are now twisted and covered with a patina of smut and blaze. In their transformed state, they serve no other aim but to visualize heat through their form and colour. Adjacent to the shelves, the fragile glass cast of a head, that of Suryavarmann VII, is lying on its side. In its transparency it becomes an image of that which is undescrivable, i.e. the contents of what is carried in the mind – in this, the sculpture loses its representative capacity.

Only one work, *contact*, seems to have restored its functioning: it is a pair of used shoes, whose worn-out soles have been reconstructed meticulously and have regained their original shape. However, if one were to wear these shoes, the mended soles would break. Having been repaired with polyester coating, Guillaume Leblon demonstrates once again that they too are not made to reach the destination.