

Ken Okiishi & Nick Mauss have been working together since they met in art school (The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York) in 1998. Their collaborative works emerge from a continuous dialogue they have while working as individual artists as well. The artworks materialize--often at the invitation of an exhibition venue to realize a project--as the ephemeral and constantly shifting private conversation is pushed out into physical form in the space. The texture of the crisis, of a hesitation at making visible the emotional and theoretical density of private thoughts, is forced out, even as the works produce a short-circuiting of sources and materials that the viewers may think they already understand. Experience itself becomes estranged.

For their exhibition at Mendes Wood DM, Mauss and Okiishi are exhibiting two new collaborative works, developed while in residence in São Paulo, set in tension with works that maintain individual signatures. This is the first time they will be exhibiting "collaborative" and "individual" works in the same space; they hope that this disturbs even further the cognitive problem of understanding how forms and materials gain shape and attach/detach from various networks of images, materials, objects and subjects.

The work in the front space, *After Depuis (Fill)*, 2014, activates the floor as if objects in a pattern can be set to "fill" a physical space in the way that they can on a screen. This virtuality of real objects is set against the physicality of "real life," as the three-dimensional fill becomes increasingly disrupted by visitors trying to navigate this perplexing "fill" of spoons and concrete eggs. This object-image emerged as a flash of memory of a work that Mauss & Okiishi had made at some point in the past, but in materials and forms shifted to arrive in the warehouse setting; memory arrives in physical forms in a way that can make the network-synching that is so often demanded of bodies and objects in an overly "connected" world seem uncanny.

Set in tension with this field of object-memories that hover on the edge of physicality and screen-presence, are new works from Ken Okiishi's much celebrated series, *gesture/data* (2013-ongoing). Okiishi was excited to find a brand of television in Brazil that comes in a white color. This allowed him to expand the notion of the TV as readymade canvas in terms of color and levels of transparency/opacity. Working with Chroma Video Paint (normally used in film video productions to knock out and reinsert backgrounds), Okiishi has developed in his past work a digital void that becomes a material one: not as a temporary technical way of filming in order to create a realistic or thrilling substitute (as in action movies), but as a suspended state of vacuum. In the works from the series exhibited here, he has expanded on this doubled void of Chroma Video Paint on the screen and the blue void of "no signal" (videoed from the CRT screen, and then compressed into a jaggy spray of pixels in mp4) on-screen at the same time, with blips of random TV taken while watching

TV while in residence in Brazil emerging in various works.

In the back space, the fill of the "spoons" runs against a strange combination of materials seen while walking around in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro--and then transformed "in the head" and in conversation by Mauss & Okiishi, as if the world were as mutable as a rough photoshop collage. Or as if a nightmare has suddenly crawled across the floor. In "Total Nightmare," 2014, a bright fuchsia sheet of plywood is met against a black weed plant seen while admiring the fantastical name of a residential building, "Henri Matisse," while the Chroma Blue Video Paint from the front room covers the aggregate of material--and a laser jitters patterns onto the whole scene. It is as if the materials of the screen itself have shifted into distinctly other materials--all suspended, on a sea of spoons, with plants dying of thirst. This is set in tension with a work from a series that Mauss first exhibited in Japan that developed into his legendary first exhibition at 303 Gallery in NY. Mauss, who works very slowly and deliberately, as if releasing artworks into the world is both a painful and essential process--presents one sole work, hovering in open space. Made with aluminum leaf on paint, this work changes dramatically based on viewing angle, proximity, and time of day. In this way, it acts as a materialization of thoughts at the back of the mind before they find words-- before they are released from their difficult imbrications.

Okiishi & Mauss' past collaborative exhibitions include One Season in Hell, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, 2007 and MD 72, Berlin, 2008; A Fair to Meddling Story, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, 2007; and in 2012, Okiishi & Mauss curated the White Columns Annual at White Columns, New York. Their books include A Fair to Meddling Story, JRP Ringier; and One Season in Hell, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York. One Season in Hell was also reprinted this year by the FRAC Champagne-Ardenne and Mousse Publishing.

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