

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Sunday, September 7th, of Jean-Luc Moulène's *Torture Concrete*, the artist's first one-person exhibition at the gallery and in New York City.

On view both at 88 Eldridge Street and 36 Orchard Street, the show is comprised of a variety of 'objects' from *Opus*, a body of work in development since 1995, along with two drawings and four photographs. While the constellation of tabletop, floor-bound, and hanging works take three-dimensional materials and photography as their particular support, they are expressly not sculptures, nor photographs. "I consider my images and objects as tools, articles of use: practical above all else," says Moulène, a self-described *technicien libertaire*. He points to the rudimentary idea of a tool: the relaying of tensions implicit to materials by both acting and being acted upon, and thus emphasizes the importance of the manipulable in his practice.

The various works in the exhibition, be they bronze or glass knots, cement sculptures of heads, or photographs, are unified by what Moulène calls his underlying protocols, his working paradigm of topology and dynamic systems. This unique *modus operandi* enables a non-monotonic entanglement between the producer, the production, and the product, that is between the artist, his imagination encountering the volition of materials, and the artwork. Following a protocol, or certain autonomous directives, implies acting in accordance with the ramifying transits between thought and matter. As Reza Negarestani writes in an essay accompanying the show, Moulène proceeds in "search for integrity in variation," looking "for opportunities to partake in variations on the basis of their underlying invariances."

When he employs the physico-mathematical entity of a knot as a protocol of construction, for instance, Moulène transcends the conventional view of art as a transitive between the artist and the world. He rediscovers the task of art in its power to rearrange and destabilize the configurational relations between understanding, imagination, and embodiment, which opens up an amplified field of ambiguity. This space of controlled ambiguity is generative, however, inasmuch as it demands new strategies and produces possibilities for the orientation of thought. Thus Moulène reactivates abstraction as "the art of rendering intelligible the mutual perturbations of thought and matter," Negarestani continues, "by organizing the space through which their respective forces are expressed." Here the artist sets out to exercise the emancipatory procedure of liberating thought from the grip of any external cause that might determine it. "The task of abstraction in this scenario," Negarestani explains, "is to liberate the virtual subject – the designated force of thought."

Bronze *Noeuds* installed alongside glass *Blown Knots* in one room produce the effect of breathing

through contracted and dilated space – the knots imploded by pulling a rope, or exploded by blowing into glass. The concrete sculptures made by filling inverted latex Halloween masks with cement are another variation of the knot in its most condensed, simplest form of a single loop surface. With this series, further, Moulène destabilizes and plays with the age-old artistic genres of portraiture and monuments by purchasing pop-culture caricatures and neutralizing their representations, as the two active materials find a kind of uneasy equilibrium. In this sense, he constantly annihilates the sterile dualities of the inside and the outside, the negative and the positive space, as well as of the abstract and the concrete. And the traditional bronze material of statues is now used to make monochrome, standard size two-dimensional pictures installed on the walls, facing the concrete monstrous heads placed on shipping blankets on the floor.

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