

*Kai Althoff: and then leave me to the common swifts*, on view at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, from September 18, 2016 through January 22, 2017, was designed and curated by Kai Althoff and organized at The Museum of Modern Art by Laura Hoptman, Curator, and Margaret Ewing, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture. On the occasion of this unique exhibition, the artist provides the following statement:

The Museum of Modern Art granted me all freedom in using the gallery's space and the Museum's profound resources to present my work in the manner that I deem appropriate at this time of *its* existence and *my* life. I am very thankful for this, for even if I strain and press myself to come to a conclusion regarding the past, a lot of the things—and many call this *work*—I made up until today, I cannot defend or think of it as something people need to see or bother with. These were often just done for myself in the very first place.

Yet to leave it to others to put them in order and arrange them for display and consumption as a somewhat logical consequence deriving from this lack of my own ability to analyze and emotionally realize their gravity feels impossible and wrong; I am still alive, and this is an institution with a history that one cannot forego naïvely, though it may mean nothing much to me. Thus I feel I have to just show it in the manner that my mere self tells me to now. I have to look at things I have fabricated earlier in life, and I will give in to my immediate reaction emotionally and handle them accordingly, when deciding what to do with them now. This is why my gratitude for the above mentioned freedom from the institution is so huge.

Mind you, this is not all my pure will, but comes from the task of putting together a show, which I was asked to do, despite my confidence terrifyingly wobbling. And that it is for the right reasons, it being so wobbly, because of how wrong one can be in reality, when one thinks one does something significantly grand with the mind, heart and hands. But in the moment of making, the object you muster gains power over you and sometimes indeed this power may stem from the highest entity, from all that is beyond words and for a human to grapple. This I believe must have a reason, which in itself is more beautiful than a failed result, or a mediocre result. This happens in everybody's life. There is no reason really why my things are exhibited in a museum and others' are not.

And yet it is true: sometimes results are really something more. If there is such within what I did, I am not to say. But the people, who will come to see it can tell. I trust them totally, whether they care about art or not. Whether they are *informed* or ignorant and full of resentment. They do not need to know of more than what they will experience, and they should know, there is *nothing* to be understood. They have already understood enough, they can answer questions themselves and the

questions they cannot answer themselves when walking, seeing, smelling and feeling while strutting through this exhibition are superfluous for now, and may clarify sometime later, or remain shelled forever.

Kai Althoff

New York, July 2016

About the Artist

Kai Althoff was born in Cologne, Germany, in 1966. Althoff has been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions in the U.S. and abroad, including: Vancouver Art Gallery; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Kunsthalle Zürich; and Simultanhalle, Cologne. His work has also appeared in many group shows at venues including: CCS Bard, Hessel Museum of Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt. Althoff was included in *Of Mice and Men*, the 2006 Berlin Biennial, as well as in *Beyond/In Western New York 2010: Alternating Currents* at the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, New York. Most recently his work was featured in the 2012 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.

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