

M23 Projects NY

05 May 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Mikkel Carl *Terrified of Society and Its Unclean Bite* opens 11 May 2018

M23 is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Danish artist Mikkel Carl – inaugurating our new ancillary space at 120 Waterbury Street, Brooklyn. The exhibit will be on view concurrently at M23/Project Room, 209 Morgan Avenue, Brooklyn.

Terrified of Society and Its Unclean Bite extends Mikkel Carl's pre-occupation with the repurposing of industrial space into that of art. Carl previously executed projects inside a garage-cum-gallery (*New Paintings Caught in the Headlights of Parking Cars* at Ringsted Galleriet, 2012), at the obsolete Danish power plant Nordkraft (*We Are All Workers* at Kunsthal Nord, 2014), and at a former wholesale farmers market now being built into condos (*Engros*, Grønstorvet, 2017).

Through tight spatial propositions, the artist suggests that the implications of such a process of spatial appropriation are at once formal, semiotic, and economic—not dissimilar from the fundamental logic of the ready-made. This dialectical looping back between object and meta-object, between macro and micro scales of signification, characterizes much of Carl's work; a method he has referred to as “associative grammar.” Here, exhibition contexts are considered and approached as linguistic structures in their own right, their signification ripe for deconstruction and critical intervention. These may range from poignant socioeconomic critiques to hoax epistemological propositions, often presented simultaneously and side-by-side, causing bewilderment in the viewer. By riffing histories of minimalism, conceptual art, institutional critique, and relational aesthetics in both sincere and highly satirical ways, Carl questions the very legitimacy of contemporary art's *modus operandi*.

The monolithic work specific to M23's Morgan Avenue project room consists of a 12 foot, concrete wall built inside the gallery space, effectively bifurcating it in two. By rendering one side inaccessible to the viewer, Carl produces a spatial self-awareness in the spirit of classical minimalist sculpture. The piece can also be understood to reference the Berlin Wall, as well as Richard Serra's controversial 1981 public sculpture *Tilted Arc*, both by-gone monumental architectures. Shared amongst these projects is a very direct attempt of controlling and commenting on space and its politics through analog and architectural means loaded with heavy-handed symbolism—as recently encapsulated by the border wall proposed to separate Mexico from the United States. Thus, perhaps a more immediately congenial source of inspiration is Michael Asher's 1974 removal of the partition wall that separated the office space from the exhibition space at Claire S. Copley Gallery in Los Angeles. On two previous occasions, Carl has engaged this work by partly tearing down partition walls he had built in existing door openings between exhibition spaces, giving the viewer a false sense of something hidden now being exposed (*A Thing Is a Whole In the Thing It Is Not*, 2012/2015). More recently, the artist covered existing exhibition architecture at Aarhus Art Museum with variously colored wall elements from previous exhibition designs, while also leaving behind the install crew's paint-splattered Bauhausian folding chairs (*What Cannot Be Imagined Cannot Be Seen*, 2015/2017).

The exhibition continues with a series of delicate wall-based works that inaugurates M23's ancillary space at 120 Waterbury Street, Brooklyn. They are made from purposefully damaged chrome metal foil applied to aluminum stretchers, so that the "paintings" mirror their surroundings — including visitors, space, and surrounding works, producing ever-digressing spatial reflections between them. The series *Untitled (You Hate the Fact that You Bought the Dream and They Sold You One)*, references an eponymous public work the artist completed in Denmark by installing self-adhesive mirror foil on poster stands in an urban railway station, instigating a moment of reflection in bypassing commuters in the place of conventional advertising. Re-entering a gallery context, Carl inverts this reflective gesture and seemingly renders it a hollowed, commoditized experience, radically questioning the supposed sincerity of the artistic gesture, Carl's own included. Ultimately, no answer or fixed position is provided by the artist: only a persistent un-doing and re-doing of the syntax of art.

Text by Jeppe Ugelvig

Mikkel Carl (Danish, b. 1976) holds an MFA from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and a BA in philosophy from Aarhus University. Alongside his artistic practice he writes, curates and teaches. He is on the board of Overgaden – Institute of Contemporary Art, and also on the Danish Arts Foundation's Committee of Visual Arts Grants Funding appointed in 2016 by the Minister of Culture. Among his latest shows are *Now Moving Towards the Inner Circles of Reality*, Ana Cristea, New York; *The Murderous Narcissism of Minor Differences*, 247365, New York; *Not a Good Choice*, M23, Miami; *We Are All Workers*, Kunsthall Nord, Aalborg; *Secondary Object*, David Dale Gallery, Glasgow.

Mikkel Carl *Terrified of Society and Its Unclean Bite*
11 May – 17 June 2018
Opening – Friday, 11 May 2018, 7-10 pm

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