

> **A FEW OUNCES OVER :**
SAMUEL ROUSSEAU

EXHIBITION DATES: FEBRUARY 13 - MARCH 14, 2004
GALLERY HOURS: FRIDAY TO MONDAY 1 TO 7 PM
EXTENDED HOURS: FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 1PM-MIDNIGHT
OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 6-9PM



Colibri, screwdriver and bird's wings, 2001

One of Samuel Rousseau's most characteristic recent works, although on a much more monumental scale than usual, was his public work, *Giant*, a multi-projection video piece. A computer system synchronizes the projections in all the windows of a multi-floored building, resulting in the eerily realistic impression of a naked giant, awkwardly stuck inside. During a presentation of the piece in Paris last Fall, France's main national daily, *Le Monde* spoke of the work as *hugely successful*, and went on: *dumbfounded passersby laughed with astonishment... each had their own theory to explain the apparition... a child asked nervously if there was any risk of the giant escaping!* (1)

Works exploiting illusion, humor, elements of surprise, questions of scale etc. in a similarly convincing way to *Giant*, are the stock of Samuel Rousseau's art, and some may be remembered from group exhibitions at Parker's Box in 2001 and 2003. Particularly striking was a work in which a goldfish appeared to be swimming around inside an egg, placed in a bird's nest in a corner of the gallery. Such was the effect that a number of visitors demanded the liberation of the poor fish. Of course, a video projector placed under the gallery floor was producing the subtle illusion.

In *A Few Ounces Over*, Samuel Rousseau's first solo exhibition in the US, the artist presents a series of works that fully utilize his highly developed ability for digging behind the façade of the life we live in, in order to turn our experience of things on its head, perhaps allowing us to see some of the poetry that exists under our noses, if only we'd look. It's important to realize here that Samuel Rousseau's illusionist practices have little to do with a quest for cheap thrills or easy laughs. While his work frequently flirts with the brinks of kitsch or bad taste, he remains in full control of the contexts his work orchestrates, and ultimately reveals much of the ironies of our own Western existence. For example, the title of the exhibition is an extension of another title, belonging to a piece called *A Few Pounds Too Much*. This work is simply a weighing scale that sniggers cruelly at anyone who stands on it. Hijacked domesticity is something that runs through much of the exhibition, which includes a washing machine, video wallpaper and a blazing fireplace, so that we might simultaneously feel very much at home, but perhaps not always entirely at ease.

Samuel Rousseau's recent exhibition highlights have included solo shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sao Paulo, Brazil; the Museum of Wallpaper, Mulhouse, France; the Museum of Art, Sabadell, Spain; the Alliance Française, Lima, Peru; Galerie Benoot, Ostend, Belgium; and Galerie Anton Weller, Paris.

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(1): *Le Monde*, Tuesday, October 7, 2003, cover page, culture section.