



WHEN A RIVER CHANGES ITS COURSE

JOHN BJERKLIE

JANUARY 23 – FEBRUARY 22, 2009

GALLERY HOURS: FRI TO MON 1 TO 7 PM

After impressive contributions to a number of group exhibitions at Parker's Box, we are delighted to present John Bjerklie's first solo project at the gallery, for which the artist has the intention of involving numerous other parties to assist and monitor his "River" as it changes course and heads off into uncharted territory.

While John Bjerklie has always seen himself as a painter and sculptor, his more recent work bore witness to a gradual explosion into a practice in which a surprisingly wide range of additional frameworks and activities contextualize the act of making paintings and sculpture. Early examples of this new direction were first seen at a Bedford Stuyvesant open studios event, then at Parker's Box, and Pulse Art Fair, on which occasions Bjerklie wheeled out in public a thoroughly intriguing and unexpected, new, multi-faceted persona, with the artist embracing multiple identities such as painter, sculptor, critic, philosopher, political commentator, TV presenter and interviewer, debater, financial analyst, trickster, dancer, joker, negotiator, voyeur, performer, poet, speaker, auctioneer...

Using in-situ environments as hosts for sculpture and painting, while at the same time being the stage for his multiple actions, Bjerklie equips them with surveillance cameras and monitors in order to play with the ambiguities of time and space, fiction and reality, live and recorded footage etc. Putting a whole new interpretation on virtual reality, Bjerklie's "state of the art", low-tech constructions and piles of stuff (mostly scrap wood, painted drop-cloths and TV monitors...) become the theater for what might at first sight seem to be little more than a set of parodies and/or critiques of the worlds of art, media, politics and society. It isn't difficult to scrape the surface, however, and penetrate the comic veneer, to find no end of deeper truths. One indication of this came in the artist's recent ongoing series of installations titled "Hot Head – Cool Head", in which two massive heads, made respectively from red and blue pallets, face off, staring at each other with surveillance camera eyes, and incrusting TVs. From humble beginnings at the Floating Studios in Lawrence, Mass., the project saw various incarnations in art school galleries, before being presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Marseille, France and finally reaching a crescendo in September, when another version of "Hot Head – Cool Head" fuelled electoral fireworks, amidst unavoidable interpretations linking them to the candidates' face-off, or the inner struggle of undecided voters, which happened when the work appeared in the prime swing state of North Carolina (Elsewhere Artists' Collaborative with a visitation at the Weatherspoon Museum).

John Bjerklie was born in Los Angeles and lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He studied at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York; Maine College of Art, Portland, Maine; and Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.

For further information please contact Parker's Box at + 1 718 388 2882 or emily@parkersbox.com