

MAX WIGRAM GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

FOS

Watchmaker

10th October – 15th December 2012

Private view: Tuesday 9th October 2012



Danish artist FOS is to establish a strangely familiar, perhaps puzzling, structure for *Watchmaker*, his third exhibition at Max Wigram Gallery.

By constructing a deceptive perfunctory entrance and fabric covered corridor with window display, the artist, whose work often includes the participatory environment, announces his intention to question the constant need to counter flux with stability, to frame our surroundings.

Inside, through the constructed entrance, a range of objects, from the three armed brass chandelier which light the bronze sculpture and crystalline salt reliefs, to the glass covered vitrines which display various sculptural pieces, allude to varying levels of function.

Inside the mock shop, or real gallery, separate spaces housing, for instance, the film projected in the round and the series of cabinets, all of which individually and collectively morph between the poetic, the real, and back again.

For further information, interviews, or images please contact the Gallery on info@maxwigram.com or call +44(0)20 7495 4960.

FOS (Thomas Poulsen) (b. 1971, Copenhagen, DK) lives and works in Copenhagen. Recent exhibitions include: *Bloomsbury Mystery Play*, Brunswick Square, London and temporary installation at Camden Arts Centre, London, 2012; *Bageri*, Andersen Contemporary, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2012; *OSLOO—A COLLECTION OF CENTERS*, Armory Performance, New York, 2012; *One Language Traveller*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Denmark, 2011. FOS participated to the 54th Venice Biennale, 2011, with *Osloo* and as part of *Speech Matters*, Danish Pavillion. His solo exhibition *Bageri* has recently been awarded the Statens Kunstfond Prize, Denmark.

ARTIST STATEMENT

FOS

Watchmaker

Art's outer structure and the artist's inner processes have changed in recent years. Art has been evolving and its knowledge developing – but what has this knowledge been used for?

One trend which emerged in the '90s saw the outside viewer tied to the artist's inner processes, through a particular relationship whereby the artist used actual people – neighbours – as an engine for a new reality. In such 'relational' works the distinction is blurred between representation and presentation (since the neighbour is both), creating a new flexibility for the artist's inner processes. However, in such works the curator also becomes a strong mediator.

The '00s also saw an exponential increase in the speed of information flow (echoing the principle of Moore's Law, which suggests that computing power doubles every two years). At the same time the world saw an economic boom, facilitated in part by this new flow of information. Meanwhile governments experimented with new models for putting culture to work, employing notions such as 'creative capital'. These factors came together in the growth of biennials and other large art platforms – which often operated simply as branding exercises for cities or countries, like elaborate perfume bottles. These larger platforms became strong mediators.

The economic boom also saw the expansion of the art fair system. The art fair began to connect a number of different interests in one space, moving away from being a simple market place, and incorporating other functions too, including social and curatorial functions. Fairs are now the place where curators go to network and to update themselves. This reduces the artistic landscape, making galleries and museums more peripheral.

Alongside such structural changes there has also been a restructuring of content. Images now come at us from the 'open source' and through every hole in our surroundings; there is an increased emphasis on image culture and on visual forms of information; while at the same time we have been swept up by the principle of continuous updating. The result is that we all have to use more time organising information, and have less time to generate shared activities and experiences. This culture inflates the power of the image, making the mechanisms that surround the image more visible and also more powerful.

The result is that both the artist and the gallery turn their attention away from the neighbour. From my viewpoint (which is also from Denmark) it feels like the gallery is turning away from its address – that spot of land on which it is placed – like a person turning its back on the street. It is gazing off into the far distance – like the fisherman's wife on the pier, waiting for the ship to return. The gallery has become a storage, waiting until the next fair; and the exhibition is simply a fire lit to keep the building warm. So instead of a beautiful 'trophy' dog that lives in the gallery (which seemed to be common in Denmark in the 90s) we should now perhaps have a humble basement cat – with these new forces moving towards a more global intimacy.

And with such a large interconnecting structure, where to put a stick in the wheel (without just making charming criticisms)? Where in this structure is the space to watch the maker?

FOS, 2012