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Michel François

Opening: 13.01.2022

Exhibition: 14.01.-26.03.2022

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Galerie Mezzanin is delighted to announce the second solo exhibition of the Belgian artist Michel François.

François is a pioneer in the field of interdisciplinary art, known for working cross-media. Though he claims no signature style, he idiosyncratically generates interconnections, tensions and resonances between his works, thereby creating a place for dialogue and exchange not only amongst visitors and objects, but also within the exhibited works themselves.

Similar to the Arte Povera artists, François uses great economy of means to transform seemingly usual and mundane objects and materials, into carriers of meaning.

Untitled (pile d'assiettes), 33 unglazed procelain plates stacked on top of each other, showcases how the status of an object can be modified by the effect of contextualization.

The play with precious and cheap materials, as can be seen in *Materialization of tongues*, a pair of worn out flip flops cast in bronze, however, is not the only antagonism François employs in his works: In *Instant Gratification (chips tree on wood)*, copper chips hang from a golden tree evoking multiple exegeses; the title also raises several questions about our consumer society and the world of excess and abundance, which we created.

François takes a similar critical look at contemporary events in his work *Golden Fence*, which, in view of its year of origin, 2015, seems to be a clear indictment of US-American politics and its cynicism.

The centre piece of this exhibition, *Promesses du capitalisme*, lives up to its title in the form of a seemingly inexhaustible waterfall of "wealth", but turns out to be a cheap alloy of metals. All that glitters is not gold...

François constructs a puzzle of contrasting colors, illusions, materials, shadows and light into a complex whole that serves as both a parable of what sculpture is capable of being and an enigmatic representation of his oeuvre.

Depending on one's perspective and point of view, the interpretation can be a narrow tightrope walk that is often on the verge of instability and shapeshifting thanks to the ambiguous and janus-faced character of his pieces. This richness in meaning, after all, is what makes it possible to visit and revisit his exhibitions, each time taking home a new revelation.

Michel François (b.1956, Saint-Trond, Belgium) lives and works in Brussels. Recent solo exhibitions include: Nineteen thousand posters. 1994-2016, Frac île-de-France, le château, Reilly, France (2016); Pieces of Evidence, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2014); Pièces à conviction, CRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, Sète, France (2012); Michel François. Le Trait commun, Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France (2012); 45.000 affiches. 1994-2011, MAC's, Site du Grand Hornu, Belgium (2011); Plans d'évasion, IAC, Villeurbanne, France (2010); Plans d'évasion, SMAK, Ghent, Belgium (2009) and Hespérides I, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland (2009). His work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions such as Documenta IX (1992), the São Paulo Biennial XXII (1994), the 48th Venice Biennial (1999) and Sonsbeek 2008. Together with Ann Veronica Janssens he contributed to The Song (2009) by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. Other collaborations with De Keersmaeker include En Atendant (2010) and Partita 2 (2013).