

Tom Burr
drunk emily

29 May – 1 August 2014

Galleria Franco Noero is pleased to present *drunk emily*, the fourth solo exhibition in the gallery of works by the American artist Tom Burr and his first exhibition specially created for the spaces in Via Mottalciata.

Tom Burr's show in the gallery consists of a series of architectural structures, objects and furnishings with a whole range of literary, cultural and popular references. The settings the artist creates using pieces of furniture, wooden elements, stools, chests of drawers, doors and false walls recreate family or common spaces, but changes in their scale and the presence of unusual sculptural elements act as foils to them, creating areas of unexpected intimacy. This produces an atmosphere of estrangement and suspension, offering a reflection – with a number of autobiographical elements – on the his work

The title of the exhibition, *drunk emily*, is a direct reference to Emily Dickinson, a sublime poet and fetish character, who has become a mainstay for the artist. Now viewed as one of pop figures of American culture, Emily Dickinson spent most of her life in her room on the top floor of her father's home, isolated from the society of which she was nevertheless an acute observer. For her, fantasy and imagination were the true means for acquiring an understanding of reality, and a way of conveying happiness.

In this exhibition, Tom Burr captures the iconic nature of this American poet and the exhilaration of her lyrics in his *drunk emily*, in which an atmosphere of mental alteration is subtly and ironically evoked in the allusion to a nightclub setting.

As well as to Emily Dickinson, Tom Burr also pays tribute to Pier Paolo Pasolini in his series of works entitled *Salò Chest of Drawers*. A number of posters from *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), the last film written and directed by Pasolini, lie covered in sand in the drawers of a chest. Here Burr plays on the ambiguity of the word *chest* – as a piece of furniture and as a human bust – making reference to human physicality and to its fleeting nature which is redeemed by works of art, be they film or poems, and to biography transformed into the stuff of legend.

Tom Burr takes inspiration from the stories of famous people, reflecting on the contrast between their public image and their private obsessions, and portraying them through the filter of his own experience. In this case, the settings that evoke them are shaped by the same contradictions, for they are both familiar and alien, as well as part of our culture and our visual codes, but from which they nevertheless gradually escape.

Tom Burr (New Haven, 1963) lives and works in New York and in Norfolk, Connecticut. His work has been shown in solo exhibitions in public institutions including the Kunstverein Braunschweig (2000), the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (2002), the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne (2006), the Long Island Sculpture Center in New York (2008), and FRAC Champagne-Ardenne (2011). He has also taken part in many group exhibitions in institutions such as the Andy Warhol Museum and the Whitney Biennial (2004), the Migros Museum in Zurich (2008), the Kunsthalle in Vienna and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (2009), the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami (2013) and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (2014).