

***A Branch of Special Methods***  
**E.B. Itso**

**March 6 – April 18 2015**

Galleri Nicolai Wallner is pleased to present a solo exhibition of works by E.B. Itso. The exhibition, *A Branch of Special Methods*, marks E.B. Itso's first solo at the gallery.

E.B. Itso's primary focus lies in what happens beyond the limits of everyday society—with the factions of people who have intentionally chosen to live outside the general population. Through the investigation of this underworld, E.B. Itso blurs the lines of documentation and participation. By searching and studying that which goes unnoticed, he inserts himself within this world, and in so doing takes on some of this secrecy.

With *A Branch of Special Methods*, E.B. Itso turns his attention towards the subculture of the criminal element. Looking at aspects of subterfuge that run throughout society, E.B. Itso focuses more specifically on the life of the criminal in captivity. Through this line of thought, a question emerges—what happens when a group so famously known for its desire to be separated and distinctly isolated is forced to let those desires go? What happens when we institutionalise those who, by virtue of how they choose to live, absolutely cannot be institutionalised? The answer is an unequivocal need to escape.

In a first room, this idea of escape is quite literally demonstrated. The installation contains a video reconstruction done by the Danish Police in the 1950s, acting out notable criminal Carl August Lorentzen's highly sophisticated and infamous break from the Horsens State Prison. There is an air of mystery and secrecy surrounding the prisoner's offense, as their actions are left deliberately out by E.B. Itso. Instead, the concentration lies fully within the idea of the escape.

In other works, the idea of the escape is more tactile. *Cardboard Boxes* is comprised of a set of standard boxes, each seemingly ordinary. However, each box is a same-size replica of one used by a prisoner to literally ship himself out of prison. With *Loop Holes*, a name, a prison and its location, a date and a measurement are on the bottom of each print. Above the inscription is a blackened rectangular shape. On closer inspection, the shapes match up with the given dimensions, which indicate that it is in reference to the measurements of a hole. Each work within the series alludes to a hole constructed and used by a prisoner for the purpose of escape.

There is something visually jarring about the works. Abrupt corners, angular lines and harsh shapes convey a constrained mentality that seems to quite literally go against the stereotyped freedom and brashness of someone who refuses to conform. The holes are small and boxes are stiff, and the reenactment of Carl August Lorentzen's escape highlights the necessity to be able to collapse in on yourself, both mentally and physically.

The way in which E.B. Itso identifies each prisoner with their manner of escape creates an intimate portrait. Each work becomes a visual means through which the spectator can imagine physically putting himself in each prisoner's position, and furthermore, imagine putting himself through his escape. What emerges is the deafening need to sustain what was already in place—to continue in the manner which they always had, and which can only happen outside of the systemised institution.

E.B. Itso has shown in institutions and galleries in the US and Europe, notably at ARoS (Aarhus), Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Copenhagen), Den Frie (Copenhagen), ICA Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia) and Printed Matter (New York) among others. His work has also been shown at *Festival of Future Nows* at Neue Nationalgalerie (Berlin).