

**MICHEL FRANÇOIS**  
**THEATER OF OPERATIONS**  
January 12 - February 11, 2006

Bortolami is pleased to present "Theater of Operations" by Belgian artist, Michel François. With this exhibition, François creates a multifaceted project that suggests that theater is a thread that binds together politics, performance, artmaking and the act of viewing art. A flag, a podium, an eagle ice sculpture made with black ink, a video projected on a map, a neon sign, a scrap of carpet and a hole in the gallery wall - all seemingly disparate clues - help create a multilayered tableau with numerous interpretations and references. François has often compared his way of working to the rhizome: a non-hierarchical structure that is a series of connected nodes. Each of the distinct parts, come together like words in a sentence. On their own, they are singular and hold individual meaning and value, but when put together, they form a cohesiveness that still allows for more than one interpretation and creates a visually intriguing environment or stage.

François's interest lies in exploring a variety of media including installation, video, sculpture and photography, often combined and linked to create a larger idea. Through these various techniques and materials, François comments on the relationships and contradictions that we face in our public and private lives. Some are more formal such as convex versus concave forms, the connection between the external and the internal, light versus dark. Others focus on political "truths" versus deception and/or manipulation. Central to the artist's work is the reconsideration of simple known images, objects or banal iconography. François approaches his subjects with the eye of a sculptor even though his medium includes photography and video. Subjects are presented with an objectiveness that focuses often on form over content. In addition to people, the artist concentrates on plants, household objects, apertures or gestures from our familiar daily existence. However, when presented in a unique light, by enlarging, cropping or rearranging the subject at hand, the artist causes the viewer to see things with subtle, new meaning.

Michel François was born in 1956 in Saint-Trond, Belgium. Solo exhibitions include Art Pace Foundation, San Antonio, Texas, 2004, De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg, The Netherlands, 2004, Space Vox, Montreal, 2003, CCA Kitakyushu, Japan, 2003, Westfälischer Kunstverein, Munster, Germany, 2003, Centre George Pompidou, Paris, 2002, Center for Photography, Geneva, Switzerland, 2002 and Fondati6n Mir6, Barcelona, 2001, Kunsthalle Bern, 2000, and Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2000. François's work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions such as, "Recent Video from Belgium," Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2002, Venice Biennale, 2001 - where he represented Belgium together with Ann Veronica Janssen, the São Paulo Biennial XXII, 1994, and Documenta IX, 1992. The artist currently lives and works in Brussels.

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