

BORTOLAMI

Michel François February 21 - March 20, 2014

Bortolami is pleased to announce the fifth solo exhibition at the gallery of Michel François, on view from February 21 to March 20, 2014. Please join us for an opening reception with the artist on Friday, February 21, from 6 to 8 pm.

Employing a wide range of materials--plaster, molten bronze, aluminum, cast glass, neon light, plants, photography, video projection--François creates environments of strange resonance, spaces of contemplation which unsettle relationships between natural and synthetic objects.

For this exhibition, François has poured black asphalt across the main space of the gallery, evoking a rough urban street. Littered with hundreds of shiny bronze peanuts (which seem to have fallen off the back of a truck), this rectangular tarmac is punctuated by spiraling cacti and surmounted by a large cube of ice, which "waters" the plants as it melts. A taut metal wire, encrusted with gold leaf and suspended across the space, vibrates continually with the air current; and wallpaper, applied like a mask onto the gallery's walls, has been intermittently torn away, exposing its rough fibers. Dense, white plaster rectangles--which François has partially submerged in a bath of ink and tea--have been hung like landscape paintings; the surreal black stains at once index a process of absorption and resemble the charred remains of a fire.

François's installation responds to the conditions of the gallery: the expansive white walls and the white wallpaper, the poured concrete floor and the black asphalt, and the rows of fluorescent ceiling fixtures, which here start to take on the quality of greenhouse lights (bringing to mind a process of photosynthesis). But what confronts viewers is a strange, inverted, contaminated ecosystem: a space of liquefaction, entropy, absorption, equilibrium, and disequilibrium.

Michel François (born 1956 in Saint-Trond, Belgium) lives and works in Brussels. Recent solo exhibitions include CRAC Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain Languedoc-Roussillon, Sète, France (2012); École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France (2012); IAC, Villeurbanne, France (2010); Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland (2009); SMAK, Ghent, Belgium for which he also proposed the curatorial project *Faux Jumeaux* (2009); Macba, Barcelona, Spain (2009); Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland (2000) and Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2000). His work has been included in numerous important exhibitions such as Documenta IX (1992), the São Paulo Biennial XXII (1994), the 48th Venice Biennial (1999) and Sonsbeek 2008, and amongst other collaborations, he has often designed sets for the eminent choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker.