

BORTOLAMI

Tom Burr

Hélio-centricities (New York)

15 January – 27 February 2021

Opening Friday, 15 January from 11am – 6pm

Bortolami Gallery is pleased to present *Hélio-centricities (New York)*, a solo exhibition in The Small Room composed of four wall works and a sculpture by Tom Burr.

The *Hélio-centricities* series was originally produced while Burr was in residency at Auroras for his 2019 solo exhibition in São Paulo. The exhibition subsequently travelled and was presented at Parque Lage Visual Art School, Rio de Janeiro. *Hélio-centricities (New York)* marks the first time the works have been exhibited in the United States.

During his time in São Paulo, Burr formed a narrative composed of three characters reflected throughout the final project – himself, Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980), and the Auroras building where Burr resided and eventually exhibited his works. These *Spatial Constraints* are part of Burr's ongoing series of bulletin boards – artworks created with archival materials from books and magazines, and occasionally items of clothing, attached to their support with steel pushpins or upholstery tacks. The bulletin boards began as a means to compile research materials for sculpture, eventually evolving into artworks in their own right. In the *Spatial Constraint* series exhibited here, Burr secures t-shirts worn during his time in São Paulo onto wood with pages from 1970s books about sexuality that he sourced in Brazil.

In Burr's own words, Hélio Oiticica is a "figure that can be an entrance" to this body of work. Oiticica, a member of the Neo-concrete and formalist movements, sought to create artwork wherein the viewer was keenly aware of their shared spatial relationship to his forms. Burr set out to discover similarities and differences between his own practice and Oiticica's. The latter's *Metaesquema*, 1958, produced the same year that the Auroras exhibition building was erected, served as a formal inspiration for Burr's *Hélio-Screen*. With the exhibition space occupying the downstairs of Auroras, and Burr living upstairs, he began thinking about the divide of public versus private spaces in architecture, an ongoing theme in his practice. The shutters protecting the windows in Burr's bedroom acted, in his eyes, as a membrane; the juxtaposition between two other types of barriers at Auroras, the gate protecting the building and the glass walls of the exhibition space, serving as further inspiration for the sculpture.

Tom Burr (b. 1963 in New Haven, Connecticut) lives and works in New York. He has shown extensively throughout Europe and the United States. He most recently was the subject of a solo exhibition entitled *Hinged Figures* at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. His work was recently featured in *Queer Abstraction* at the Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA. Burr's work has been collected by major museums internationally, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Migros Museum, Zurich, Switzerland; MOCA, Los Angeles, CA; MuMOK, Vienna, Austria; New York Public Library, New York, NY; Sammlung Grasslin, Germany; Sammlung Verbund, Vienna, Austria; Ludwig Museum, Koln, Germany; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; FRAC, Champagne Ardenne, France; FRAC, Nord-Pas de Calais, France; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; and the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel. Burr attended the School of Visual Arts and the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York.