

## Reviews

### 12.11.09 - Disarming Matter

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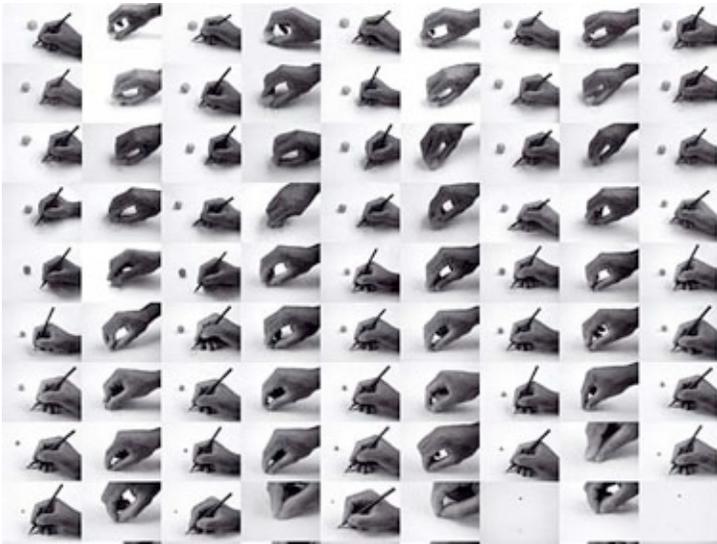
Dunkers Kulturhus, Helsingborg, Sweden. Produced in collaboration with Residency Far Away So Close

Slowly and unnoticed, the hydraulic arm has drilled itself into the log. A brutal cracking sound is heard and thereafter silence. The log has been cleaved in two and successfully fulfilled its senseless task – making itself worthless. The installation *Untitled* (2007) by the Italian artist Archangelo Sassolino is paradoxical to the conventional act of creation, formed by its own destruction.



Archangelo Sassolino, *Untitled*, 2007. Wood, steel, hydraulic piston. 100 x 130 x 25 cm. Courtesy Galleria Galica, Milano.

Embodied by Sassolino's installation, as well as other works whose method and form are predicated upon their own self-destruction, negation or dissolution, the exhibition "Disarming Matter" announces a timeless but still timely concept. In an era when accelerating production works as the leading motif for social change, the concept evokes a subtle criticism, not least with environmental pollution as a result of production and consumerism in mind; though the lasting impression is the presence of melancholy. The exhibition reactivates the role of *vanitas* and reminds us of our predestined end.



Ariel Orozco, *Doble Desgaste*, 2005. Fuji Crystal Chromogenic Archival C-print, Edition 10 + 1 AP / Tirage 8/10. 150 x 239 cm (with frame 154 x 244 cm). Courtesy Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Mirko Stiglich/Myto Gallery, Mexico City.

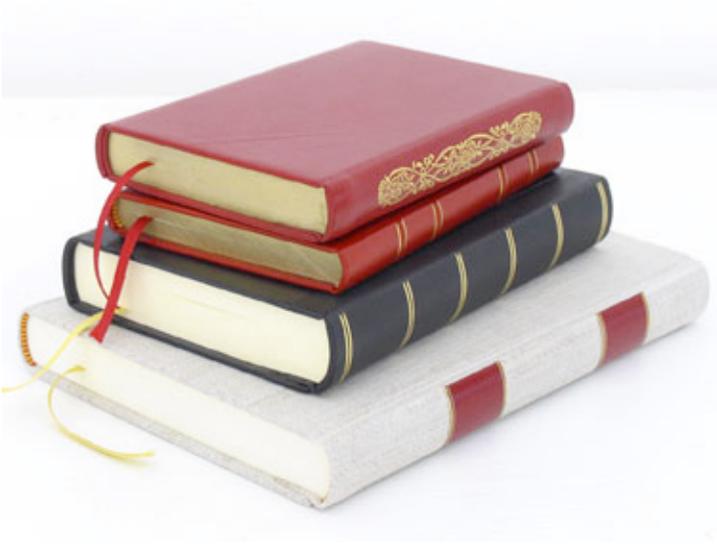
Curator Chris Sharp's compilation of works uncovers a low-voiced and poetical explosive force. One indicative testimony to this is Cuban artist Ariel Orozco's photographic work *Doble Desgaste* (2005), a systematic documentation of him drawing a portrait of an eraser, after which he erases the drawing with the same eraser. The act continues until the eraser has disappeared; appearing to be a monotonous act, it is nevertheless an allegory of self-censorship's politicized silence.



Alexander Gutke, *Subtraktion (no. 4)*, 2008. Ink on paper, 170 x 150 cm. Courtesy Galerija Gregor Podnar, Berlin/Ljubljana. Photo: Sigfrid Carlsson, Bohusläns museum.

By fitting the light switches with a timer, the light in the exhibition space is periodically turned off. German artist Mantla Reutler's installation, *Time Has Ceased Space Has Vanished* (2006), is not only eradicating itself but also the exhibition since the visitor cannot see it. Thus, the work depreciates the institution's power by leaving the decision to the visitor as to when and if the light should be turned on again.

Another approach is illustrated by the Swedish artist Alexander Gutke, whose self-reflective piece *Subtraktion (nr. 4)* (2007) realizes its own idea. Over and over again, the words "all the colours of the dark" have been stamped on paper with the subtractive printing colors cyan, magenta and yellow until the words are no longer possible to read. Instead, the over-saturation of color creates a black void shifting through all the shades of darkness.



Alice Guareschi, *The Silent Sound Sense*, 2007. Leather, fabric, paper. 23 x 21 x 9.5 cm. Courtesy Collezione Mauro Casanova & Galleria Sonia Rosso, Torino.

In relation to the literal and metaphorical self-dissolving works, Ulla von Brandenburg's 16-mm film *Around* (2005) and Italian Alice Guareschi's *The Silent Sound Sense* (2007) appear particularly interesting. In Brandenburg's film a group of people stand in a circle on an empty street with their backs to the viewer. Their backs follow the movement of the camera and their faces remain unseen — we are denied admission to the group. Similarly, secretly closing itself in an enigmatic silence is Guareschi's work, showing books with spines on both ends. By enclosing and distancing themselves they keep their mystery forever intact and exercise an almost irrepressible fascination.

Artists: Pierre Bismuth, Ulla von Brandenburg, Alexandre Estrela, Jeff Feld, Douglas Gordon, Alice Guareschi, André Guedes, Alexander Gutke, Ariel Orozco, Mandla Reuter, Evariste Richer, Michael Sailstorfer and Arcangelo Sassolino.



Michael Sailstorfer, *Zeit ist keine Autobahn*, 2008. Tire, iron, electronic engine, wall. 90 x 60 x 60 cm. Courtesy Johann König, Berlin.