

Press release

Michel François | *Une Hétérotopie*

09 June- 15 September, 2018

Opening: Friday, June 8, 2018, 6-9 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce, *Une Hétérotopie*, a solo exhibition of new works by Michel François. The gallery has worked with the artist since 1991. *Une Hétérotopie* will be his 12th solo exhibition with the gallery.

François transforms seemingly uncomplicated objects and materials, or traces of past events, into deeply resonant carriers of meaning. His sculptures can be seen as explorations of cause and effect, and the ways in which simple gestures can change the status of an object or have important consequences.

Une Hétérotopie presents new video installations and a series of related sculptural works. The exhibition derives its title from Michel Foucault's notion of the heterotopia: a space of otherness that is both physical and mental. Such places, which function as counter-sites that simultaneously represent, contest, and invert other real sites within a culture are "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible." Various echoes and mirroring ripple throughout the exhibition. Like a game of hide-and-seek, a small reference that appears in one work will be transformed in another, just as the countless catalog envelopes that line labyrinthine rows of metal shelves in one of the channels of François' new video installation appears again in sculptural form as an outsized golden envelope. The four-channel video installation juxtaposes footage François shot in locations ranging from Rajasthan to Rotterdam. The incidental sounds in each of these locations spill into one another: the propulsive drumming and Shehnai music that provides the soundtrack for a swirling dancer in India, traffic sounds and the occasional car alarm that punctuate the intense concentration of a man balancing a soccer ball on a busy street, or birds chirping as a man readies his oxen to plow a field in Mysore. Objects that appear in the video—a dancer's dress, a cigarette, a piece of stone, or a flip-flop—materialize again in other spaces of the exhibition.

In *Une Hétérotopie*, François enacts a series of physical, conceptual, and perceptual displacements to create latent spaces of possibility, like a room within a room that functions as a nexus of material transformation. A series of quotidian objects reside in this dingy space, like a deflated soccer ball, a prison door taken off its hinges, and various piles of ashes or smoldering bits of debris. While the precise function of such a space doesn't readily reveal itself, different orders of relations and social codes intersect in the multivalent objects it contains: leisure, power, creativity, and destruction.

Michel François (b.1956, Saint-Trond) lives and works in Brussels. Among countless international exhibitions, he has presented projects at the Havana Biennial (2015), the Belgian Pavilion at the 48th Venice Biennale (1999), the 22nd São Paulo Biennial (1994) and Documenta IX in Kassel (1992). He has had solo exhibitions at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Dia Center for the Arts, New York; S.M.A.K., Ghent; Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Haus der Kunst, Munich. He has participated in group exhibitions at venues such as Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Tapei Fine Art Museum, Taipei; Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz; Jeu de Paume, Paris; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Fondation Hermès, Brussels.

Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias and Utopias," ("Des Espaces Autres," March 1967), translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, October 1984