

GRAHAM WILSON

Quarantine

SPRING/BREAK ART SHOW

March 6 – March 12, 2018

Graham Wilson's "Quarantine," installation deconstructs the act of painting to shine a light on the emotional and psychological forces at play during the art-making process. Wilson investigates the unique brand of existential tension that pulls at artists through expressing his own self-imposed alienation as well as the need to present a true self, inside and outside of the studio, an existence that straddles the spectrum between thoughts of grandeur and deep-seated self-loathing.

Wilson uses the basic components of a painting to allude to the expressive and perceptual ambitions that drive creativity. Lining the perimeter of the space are traditional milk containers filled with linseed oil. Appearing at first as urine, the bottles eerily represent the results of common social anxieties that trap our minds and at times our bodies as well. Tallies scratched into the wall act as a marker of time, dug up and embedded with pure pigment, thus, inside the wall and on the floor sit the two elements needed to make paint. This wall piece, "101 Years and Counting..." references the cyclical periods of ruin at play in Gabriel Marquez' *100 Years of Solitude* as a comparison to Wilson's recurrent method of destroying paintings in order to create new and different works from the remnants. Through cutting into the wall, vibrant pigment is exposed. We garner that the previously finished wall almost acted as skin, a barrier, to guarding one's emotions. Now opened up in gashes that reveal vibrant emotion.

Inside this visceral arena of raw material, sit three works, further commenting on anxieties particular to artists. In "Standand Pathos...(Queen Size)" we see one of Wilson's signature quilts, now being used to encase a figure inside. Different size belts are strapped around the bundled figure to create further restriction, the range of sizes from children's to adult's belts, alludes to life-long constrain. The tight wrapping appears as a cocoon or a soothing swaddle from childhood. The artist is now wrapped inside of his own quilt to calm himself and hide from society. Sounds echo throughout the room, coming from "Missed Calls", the artist's telephone and answering machine that sit in the room, alive. Viewers are invited to answer the phone when it rings, or playback the messages at will, the artist thus intends to take a step in the

direction of honesty, openness. The results of staying stuck in a previous mindset where you are cut off from communication to the outside world. A further comment that with this lack of communication comes a sickness, the same such sickness which leads to the vast majority of problems in society.

The piece adjacent to this, “The Tortured, Tragic, Reclusive, Reticent, Painfully Cryptic Greatest Living White Male Painter” is a darkly comedic critique that acts as an abstract self portrait of the artist. The piece comments on the hereditary ego instilled in young men from the time they are born, keeping them in obstinate and outdated mindsets. The piece consists of a box of the UK product “Kleenex Mansize” tissues on a pedestal, further highlighting the perception of difference based on gender. Scattered around the pedestal are used tissues but instead of snot they are riddled with paint, a sign of the artist washing his hands of age-old doctrines. Bodily elements replaced by artistic media represent how natural and necessary creative release is to human life.

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