

KRISTOF KINTERA: 'LAY DOWN AND SHINE'

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galerie schleicher+lange is proud to present **Lay down and shine**, a new exhibition by Kristof Kintera (1973, Prague, Czech Republic). The Prague-based artist's approach often involves taking familiar objects that he alters substantially, transforming them into sculptures. Via this process, the everyday all of a sudden conveys the impulsive, as in the work of Charles Ray, Robert Gober and Maurizio Cattelan. But rather than alluding to powerful historical figures or leitmotifs as these artists do, Kristof Kintera chooses more innocuous items. He gathers objects straight out of the average consumer's day-to-day life, such as bicycles, pushchairs, plastic bags, vacuum cleaners and sleeping bags. The artist corrupts their normal use by ascribing them micro-fictions or absurd usages, and attributing them the status of works of art.

In his current show, the artist alludes to urban organisation: to create these new works he has salvaged a street lamp and portable security barriers setting up an environment associated with crowds. The barriers can serve to prevent a surge of demonstrators or to organise a queue before a rock concert. The street lamp illuminates everybody indiscriminately and is reminiscent here of one of Kristof Kintera's previous pieces, **My light is your light** (2008): a huge chandelier made out of street lamps retrieved in Prague (they had been discarded by the council, having been replaced by a more modern version).

The artist has of course manipulated the objects so as to call into question or revise the functionality of urban objects. In the piece **Lay down and shine** the street lamp has been cut in order to fit inside. The logic of containing something has been enhanced to the detriment of the object that is being contained. Obsolete, the lamp evinces a bygone chapter in the history of Prague, lights up an interior, almost blinding the spectator. Looming like a sad monster, the work hints at the unrealism of certain collective measures.

In the first room, portable security barriers (**Paradise Now**, 2009) are decked out in antlers, like a stag's. We almost expect the barriers to bound away gracefully like the animal itself at the slightest noise. Normally used to contain a surging crowd, here the object might take flight imminently. The piece calls to mind road signs that warn that deer may appear, although the beasts never seem to materialise. Here the barriers evoke an absent crowd, contained, monitored, organised, replaced by a wild animal that braves the dangers of the road, blissfully unaware and free. The themes of danger, security and freedom are tackled time and again in Kristof Kintera's work, in which lighthearted humour gradually gives way to a genuine reflection on the gregarious mechanisms of social organisation.

Kristof Kintera boasts a remarkable international career and has also exhibited several times in France. He participated in Marc-Olivier Wahler's inaugural exhibition at Paris' Palais de Tokyo in 2006, in **The Crowd (0-Infinity)** at La Tôlerie Contemporary Art Space in Clermont-Ferrand in 2008, curated by Guillaume Désanges, and **Mes Dalton**, in 2009, at La Chapelle du Genêteil Contemporary Art Centre. Internationally, his work has also been shown at Ludwig Museum in Budapest (Hungary), Bonn's Kunstmuseum (Germany), Mikkeli Art Museum (Finland), Moderna Museet (Sweden), Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (Germany), Casino de Luxembourg (Luxemburg), MARTa Herford (Germany), amongst others.