

LAUREL
GITLEN

122 Norfolk Street
New York, NY 10002

www.laurelgitlen.com

t 212.274.0761
f 212.274.0756

ERIK WYSOCAN
Paris Spleen

January 13–February 17, 2013
Opening reception January 13, 6–8pm

"Might it not multiply into many pieces of good money? Might it not also lead to prison? A baker, a tavern keeper, for instance, might have him arrested as a counterfeiter or a disseminator of bad money. But on the other hand, the counterfeit coin for a poor little speculator, might well be a germ of several days' wealth. And so my fancy ran riot, lending wings to my friend's imagination and drawing all possible deductions from all possible hypotheses."

—Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen*

Laurel Gitlen is pleased to announce *Paris Spleen*, an exhibition of new work by Erik Wysocan. This will be the first exhibition in our new space at 122 Norfolk Street.

What gives value to "value"? Through a series of sculptural objects, paintings and displays, *Paris Spleen* develops a commentary on the creation of value, and the role of optical, aesthetic, and subjective dynamics for such production. Rather than considering this question from the perspective of circulation, the exhibition takes as its starting point the figure of the counterfeiter: for example, a coin "minted" by Diogenes, notorious for debasing his silver alloy with non-precious metals, is represented here as a series of casts of an actual ancient drachma, which was long ago stamped with the Greek philosopher's initials—counterfeits of the original counterfeit.

Such doubling is reinforced with the presentation of mirrors, arranged to reverse the normally reversed image of the viewer, alongside plywood substitutes of previous works, and sculptural displays which occupy space in lieu of the objects themselves. In this way, the assurance of value through optical security—that is, through epistemological certainty—is revealed as dependent upon a secondary support system.

But Wysocan's work goes further than a deconstructive minimalism with his super-black paintings. By repurposing a material originally developed for the aerospace industry—this is possibly the darkest man-made material ever manufactured (99.99% black)—the paintings reference a tension at play in the history of abstraction, the contrasting "value" of color-field paintings; and yet the dead matte surfaces, almost tactile in their swallowing of light, subordinate this tension to a prior mode of valuation, that of the eye and of our sensory-motor system. Abstraction operates here not as a counterpoint to figuration but by reaching the optical baseline of perception as such.

This thematic continues in the back of the gallery. At first glance, the wall-mounted displays appear to be empty. Yet from behind each black glazing there emanates the palest of geometric glows: with an arrangement of three sets of currency (the US dollar, the euro, and drachma forgeries) under an infrared light—a common technique used to identify counterfeit currency—Wysocan merges discourses on aesthetic and financial abstraction. It is at the limits of perception, at that

point where the image vanishes and there is only void, that the abstract, axiomatic functioning of capitalism operates with the most aggression.

But on that threshold, and after all this doubling and subtraction, what remains is the body: here, the casts of collectible figurines, beggars every last one of them, just like Diogenes himself, who slept on the streets in order to repudiate, not just with words but with his very corporeality, the values of ancient Greek society. The debasement of currency, the revaluation of bodies: Wysocan's exhibition indicates how the truth of value production—not of the market system, but of our living materiality—can only be spoken from the position of the counterfeiter.

Erik Wysocan (b. 1977) lives and works in New York. His work has previously been exhibited at SculptureCenter, New York; Brown Gallery, London; and Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, where in 2011 he had his first solo exhibition. Under his imprint Halmos he recently produced *Dexter Sinister, Watch Wyoscan 0.5 Hz* in collaboration with Dexter Sinister, currently on view at Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp. This February, it will be included in *White Petals Surround Your Yellow Heart* at the ICA Philadelphia.

Please note the gallery's new location at 122 Norfolk Street, one block east of Essex Street between Rivington and Delancey. The gallery is open Wednesday-Sunday, 11am-6pm. For more information, please contact galler@laurelgitlen.com or 212.274.0761.

**** Additional viewing hours in the dark will be available Sundays from sunset until 7pm for works with infrared light.**