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## **LUCA FREI**

### **Watch Out**

**NOVEMBER 14 - DECEMBER 20 2008**

Studio Dabbeni presents its second personal exhibition of the artist Luca Frei (born in Lugano in 1976, he lives and works in Malmö, Sweden).

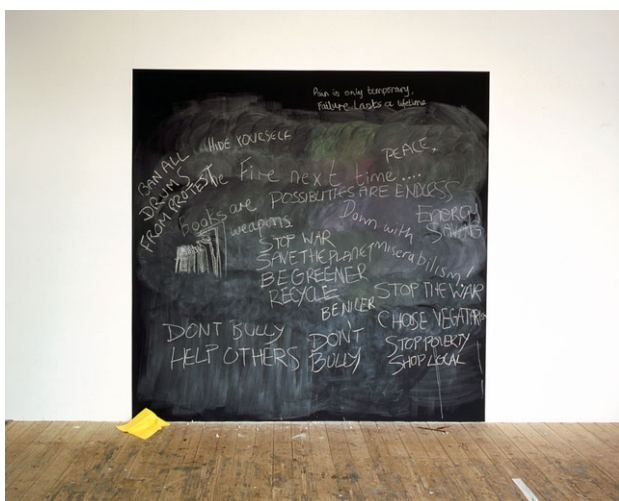
Watch Out, the title of the exhibition, is repeated over and over again in the different works shown, and becomes the unsettling admonition that runs throughout it. It is meant to be a caution to stay alert, to stay on guard, in order to protect oneself from the external dangers that, as the artist emphasises, could turn out to be ambiguous, and could keep a person from having certain experiences. To the idea of a platform as a place for encounters and discussion on subjects such as education, language, institutionalised reality, and utopia, all present in his former works, there seems to co-exist, in the artist, an awareness of the dangers inherent in society. This is not an idea that stems from a fear that has just cropped up, but is a precise assertion that impels us towards reflection. These two moments, receptiveness towards dialogue and defensiveness, clash, but do not annul each other, and represent two aspects or dynamics that are intrinsic to the reality we live in.

The starting point for the artist's investigation is the collage, a recurrent element characteristic of his artistic practice. As often occurs in his works, he brings a kind of recycling into play, in this case an image, represented by the written words Watch Out, which he re-proposes in various forms, with the intention of further developing their formal and conceptual content.

Using an evocative photograph by Rodtchenko, Frei has made a collage representing male figures, seen from above, moving across a public square. Onto this image Frei makes the words Watch Out emerge. In so doing, it almost seems as if the artist is representing people seen at any random moment during the day, going from place to place, for different reasons: individuals with whom we can identify, and to whom this admonition must be addressed. This can also be found in the second work presented by the artist, in which the writing is made to explode in a collage that recalls an element from a Futurist work. In both works of art, realised on wrapping paper, the rest of the letters taken from the compositions of two other works on exhibit are used. The first is comprised of a light box with the front part made of opaque glass on which the artist has painted the phrase in black. This is a work conceived by the artist as if it were an urban sign. The writing appears in a second work, made of one reflective surface in which the spectator is reflected, both physically and ideally. A documentary photograph taken by the artist during the exhibition "Disobedience", at the Nottingham Contemporary in Nottingham (Frei was responsible for the display of the exhibition) is the origin of a work made of a black square painted on the wall, upon which Frei places phrases written in different coloured neon that have been retrieved from some of the provocative affirmations that the public wrote with chalk in Nottingham. On one wall in the same room the artist has made a wall drawing in which are represented three square shapes upon which rises a male figure with his arm raised. This same figure has appeared in Frei's installations on other occasions, and he has described it as a sort of scenic element. In this work the distance between the squares alludes to the fragmentation of time and, consequently, of man's certainties. The raised arm suggests, in this case, the effort that is required to clasp on to something in order to not be set adrift, in a compromised reality in which one is constantly pushed to "be on the alert". Nevertheless, at the same time, the artist emphasises how by seeking a foothold as support this figure ends up being hampered in having experiences that could be positive, thus missing out on the chance to embrace life fully.

**Opening: Friday November 14 2008 - 18.00**

**Tuesday - Friday 09.30 - 12.00 / 14.30 - 18.30, Saturday 09.30 - 12.00 / 14.30 - 17.00 / Sunday/Monday Closed**



**ARTISSIMA**

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Preview/Opening: November 6 2008