



CARLOS BEVILACQUA
NEW YORK

... from the untrustworthy (political speeches
... paganda), to the canonical (heavy hitters like
... Lacan) and the obscure (Louis Althusser).
... are enough words here to fill at least a thick
... or two. Standing in front of *When the Last Tree*
... 2008, in the reception area, we quickly realize that
... need to commit at least thirty minutes to read
... word on the twenty-two-by-thirty-two-inch paper—
... it's just the first work in the show. There are four
... each large-format works and two even larger sculp-
... tures—also covered with words written in
... e. The second sculpture, in the back room, is
... by Plato's cave and was created in collaboration
... an expert in the history of the Middle East.
... *Dimah*, 2009-2010, a linen curtain eighty inches
... and twenty-one feet long, is a very big surface to
... with words and images. If that's not an earnest
... to make sense of things, then what is?
... to process all this information? The images point
... the right direction: here's a caricature of Reagan;
... a fat pig in a business suit, making off with a suit-
... of profits. Even the choice of fonts helps tell the
... out the overwhelmed feeling is part of the point.
... meant to struggle. Rather than rely on the
... turning eye and false certainty of the visionaries
... recalls, McGill reaches outward, casting his net
... er in a search for meaning that is frantic, perhaps
... , but nothing if not serious and committed.

—Lara Kristin Herndon

In their *The Realistic Manifesto*, constructivists Naum Gabo and Anton Pevsner claim that “no new artistic system will withstand the pressure of a growing new culture until the very foundations of Art will be erected on the real laws of Life.” In this statement, the artists, who were brothers, highlight one of the major contributions of constructivism to the work of contemporary artist Carlos Bevilacqua—inquiry into the nature of reality. In addition, they cast their artistic process as a play of opposites, including art and technology.

In *Dois [two]*, Bevilacqua's first one-person gallery exhibition in New York, forms and materials express the aims of the latest social order [Simon Preston Gallery; May 9—June 27, 2010]. Stressing objectivity and scientific investigation, the show embraces the concept that conflict and opposition represent a struggle between actual and potential worlds.

The works inhabit space, relying on the most mundane objects to make more with less. *Alquimista*, 2010, for example, is a simple and precise open-floor construction made of wood, thread, and stone, seemingly ignited through actions and events. In this, Bevilacqua works much like an ancient alchemist, endowing his works with a universal remedy or an elixir of longevity. The gravitational pull, which draws bodies towards each other, rotates the geometric wood planes to establish a three-dimensional volume. Seen as a diagram, it reveals interests in mathematics and geometry. Each configuration can be taken apart as easily as it is built up, reverting the piece back to its original form. This inherent mutability thus illustrates the work's production process.

The self-contained system *Bacia de 2 pulsos (Basin with 2 pulses)*, 2010, could function as a piece of short fictional prose. It tells a story of relationships between linked and unlinked forms—that is, individuals. In this work, two hollow glass balls float in water topped by a yellowish-green oil layer in a translucent jar. The tension between the glass and the balls causes the oil to expand

on the jar's surface, generating a specific, yet contingent, residual texture. This specific contingency, which crystallizes similarities and differences, gives the piece a universal dimension.

Relying on industrial materials, *Ek-north*, 2010, literally comes out from above, released from the wall and suspended by an amalgam of wood, steel, stone, lead, and fishing line. The work acts as a form in space, evoking kinesis, the celestial bodies that orbit the sun or a compass' magnetized pointer. Yet, while it gives the impression of restless mobility, it is fixed. In fact, *Ek-north* mobilizes the viewer, who must move around its three-dimensional assemblage to experience the sculpture, that is, to better understand the object represented in real time.

Material conditions determine every aspect of this exhibition. In both its conception and execution, each sculpture plays on immanent principles, thus embodying the laws of life itself. As a construction, each defies categories while attempting to deal materially with its component objects themselves. In this, Bevilacqua's art evokes a play of knowledge and power by placing us at their center here and now.

—Lori Salmon

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LEFT TO RIGHT: Carlos Bevilacqua, *Bacia de 2 pulsos*, 2010, glass, water and oil, 12 x 15 x 12 inches; Carlos Bevilacqua, exhibition view of *Dois* at Simon Preston Gallery, New York, June 27, 2010 [courtesy of the artist and Simon Preston Gallery, New York; photo: Bill Orcutt]