

sebastián gordín

if animals didn't exist..

9 december 2016 – 9 february 2017

private view : thursday 8th december 2016
6:30 - 8:45pm

37 rathbone street, w1t 1nz london



Inventory, 2015, wood, glass, brass, paper, 38x66x55cm

rosenfeld porcini is pleased to announce a solo exhibition by the argentinian artist **Sebastián Gordín**.

"Deep meaning lies often in childish play" (Friedrich Von Schiller)

Sebastián Gordín's mid-career retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires in 2014 represents a milestone in his career. Showcasing the remarkable evolution of his art, the chronological arrangement of works enabled us to see his continual artistic development and, at the same time, led us to the memorable grand final space which contained a comprehensive selection of his mini-theatre installations. Giving display of unique narrative inventiveness and observational acumen, scenes from a range of subjects varying from imaginary museums, libraries hit by a disaster, historical tableaux etc, all made in miniature and enclosed within a glass case, ultimately comment on man and his relationship to society.

One of the highlights of the show, the work entitled 'The Magic Triangle', is being unveiled for the first time in the UK as a crucial part of our exhibition. The inner, glass enclosed, mini world depicts a precisely ordered imaginary studio of an artist/artisan. Every element sitting in exactly the right place. However, outside this area, total chaos reigns. A solitary figure stands smoking a cigarette while scattered paraphernalia from a studio in disarray lie all around him. The juxtaposition of order and chaos, with order siphoned off in a perfectly controlled but unreal space, appeared to push Gordín's practice onto another level. In fact, the retrospective represented for him both a culmination and a new beginning. Since that show, his works have taken on further transformations. In 'La Habitación del Hijo', our gaze and interpretation of the scene is partially obscured by the frosted glass which casts a veil of mist onto the world within.

Gordín emerged in the Argentina of the late 80's and was part of a group of artists who were criticised for their apparently apolitical art. In fact the artist talks of the sense of the 'joy of creation' which suffuses his work as a necessary reaction to the extreme darkness of the terrifying period in the 70's which Argentina went through. Gordín's fascination with the world of books led to his iconic series of faux magazine covers which drew from the ancient marquetry techniques found in Renaissance palaces and churches. Magazine covers mark a continuum through the artist's production. Gordín's work connects two worlds not often seen together: the exquisitely crafted object and the 5 cent magazine meant to be read and discarded. This ability to embrace culture from a 360 degree standpoint is crucial in understanding both the artist and his practice.

His early works contain an ability to look at the world with the wonder of a child. His constructions transmit pure visual pleasure through their endless playfulness and originality. An admirer of the great comic French film-maker Jacques Tati, Gordín engages with the concept that comedy can take shape from any kind of observation. Inevitably, as both his artistic vision and his technique have developed, the wonder has remained as has his lightness of touch, yet it has progressively outgrown that of the child.

'Inventory' continues the artist's fascination with wood as his primary material. Portraying the artist's studio, this work mirrors Sebastián Gordín's ideal world, the dream environment where creativity is stimulated and fantasy is unleashed. Every piece distinctive yet following an undefined logic.

The exhibition at rosenfeldporcini will signal yet another departure in his work. The world of museums which represented the source for many of his 'constructions' has been replaced by a far more open universe. The landscape is now abstract and the forms within it are part animal, part rock, part vegetal but most of all they refer to twentieth century sculpture. One work entitled, 'never trust an artist' relates to his 'credo' that a work of art is always part of a collective inspiration rather than the fruit of individual genius.

The exhibition title, 'If animals didn't exist....' quoting the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, references the sense of open-endedness which permeates these works.

In an attempt to define his *modus operandi*, Sebastián Gordín draws an analogy with the relationship between the spider and the fly. Despite the reciprocal awareness of each other's existence, the fly does not notice the web and the spider doesn't think of the fly when the web is woven. They are both blind to each other. The artist feels the same 'blindness' about his working method, in which inventiveness and exploration proceed hand in hand 'blind' to previous projects. This declaration is a perfect testimony to both his desire to unceasingly reinvent himself and the integrity of his artistic search.

Sebastián Gordín, born in 1969 in Buenos Aires, lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

He studied drawing at the School of Fine Arts Manuel Belgrano from where he graduated in 1989 as a teacher of drawing.

His works have been extensively shown across Europe, America and Africa in such prominent institutions as: in the Instituto de cooperación Iberoamericana (ICI), Buenos Aires, Argentina (1993), First Biennial of Art in Johannesburg, South Africa (1995), ICI (2001). In 2009 he received the International Artists in Residence Argentina (RIAA), Ostende, Argentina. Throughout his career, Gordín has been presented in several international galleries and art fairs including Miami Basel, Basel, Arco Madrid, Art Rio and Zona Maco. In 2014 he had a major retrospective at Buenos Aires Museum of Modern Art.

His works have been widely collected and feature in the following public and private institutions: Musac, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, MAR Museo de Arte de Rio de Janeiro, Blanton Museum of Art, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Argentina, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Bahía Blanca, Argentina and in many private collections such as the Colección Cisneros, New York City and Caracas.