

TANYA LEIGHTON

PRESS RELEASE

SANYA KANTAROVSKY

DEAR DILETTANTE

8 September – 27 October 2012

Preview Friday 7 September, 6-9 pm

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Dear Dilettante,

From the Inside Out:

Don't worry little man.

My lingua franca.

Here is a project: Put on your coat and come inside. Close the door.

The other one never waits.

I'll tell you:

Distracted as you were, attention deficit and all, you focused on the visible parts.

Googley man.

The notebook is filled with nonsense you doodled in front of the rotary phone, head tilted, eyes raised to the ceiling.

The Third Empty Desk.

It was something about not listening, I don't remember, I wasn't paying attention.

Library Windows.

A very thin sculpture with a painted event on one side.

Taters.

The ill fitting suit for burdensome social obligations.

A Situation.

The fish wrapped in last week's news.

A Misplaced Name.

Untitled.

The door that opens inwards.

The Joke that's Hard to Understand.

The oratorio left to rest.

An Insider's Insider.

Don't interrupt my solitude but for heaven's sakes, please don't leave me lonely.

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Tanya Leighton is pleased to present *Dear Dilettante*, the first European solo exhibition by Russian-born, Los Angeles-based artist, Sanya Kantarovsky.

Kantarovsky's work entails a binary investment. Firstly, in the near religious, painterly affect of representation painting - the gesture aimed at efficiently conveying a specific referent - boredom, loneliness, and other basic problems of the human condition. Then, in the dissolution and instability of said affect - here are images that slowly fall apart, giving way to the reality of material and the thin object unsuccessfully posing as a window, acutely aware of it's own limits and belatedness. Combining eclectic and often dissonant art historical tropes and motifs, Kantarovsky gentrifies disparate perspectives on creative production, refusing to privilege the programmatic over the spiritual and vice versa.

Echoing the ambivalence of the clichéd antihero dilettante, from Dostoyevsky's *Raskolnikov* to Huysman's *Des Esseintes*, Kantarovsky's work ultimately points back to the anxiety at the site of it's own production - the studio, the desk, the stage. This exhibition is comprised of a modest constellation of paintings and sculptures assembled in the form of a fictive note to the figure of the Dilettante, pointing to the fear of anemia within making or the lack of expertise within looking. The pictorial spaces of the paintings involve an ongoing visual vocabulary comprised of both generic symbols that manage to retain an uncanny singularity: the blank page - an offer of potential or a testament of failure; animated hands and feet - discreet conduits for affect; lamps - tools aimed at illuminating a space of production that seem to emit little actual light; and the mask, serving as a tether to the performative, or an allegory for the painted façade that conceals a painting's original surface.

At times the paintings act as stand-ins for the exterior (representation?) or the interior (abstraction?). This dialectic opposition is echoed in the whimsy of the described subjects - suspended in indiscernible spaces between coming and going, opening and closing. The sculptures in the exhibition further this ambiguity: In *A Situation*, for instance, the initial view offers a lone, thin black line, reminiscent of the quiet secular poetry of Sandback's strings, yet upon closer inspection animates into the opposite of this take - a nearly grotesque leg and shoe - a portrait of a decision to opt out of using a door to make an exit.

Perhaps the most understated work in the show - *Library Windows*, is a continuation of the artist's ongoing interest in memory and archive. Adopted from the pseudo Constructivist motif of steel grates protecting the library windows across from Kantarovsky's childhood Moscow apartment, two new grates are installed on the windows in the interior of the upper gallery space. In effect the room comes to serve as a portrait of another building's facade via its overlooked pedestrian décor. Here the conflation of space continues, echoed by *A Misplaced Name*, in which a large umbrella hints at the presence of poor weather inside the gallery. Or perhaps inside the painting, the author, or the viewer.

For further information and images please contact info@tanyaleighton.com