

REGINALONDON

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CLAIRE FONTAINE
FIGHTING GRAVITY
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Private view: Thursday 27 January, 6-9pm

*No man ever steps in the same river twice,
for it's not the same river and he's not the same man*
Heraclitus

Fighting Gravity aims to approach the threatening magma deposited inside our lives by the recent economical crisis.

Because we have not witnessed any political change nor any legal prosecution of the thefts and the mistakes that caused the financial disaster, our recent past has become something like a removed memory, familiar and disturbing at the same time. Since the blatant failure of the mechanisms that supported the legitimacy of liberal capitalism was accompanied by a general impunity and a lack of public protests, we are left with the feeling that the only law that remains un-negotiable is the law of gravity. But 'gravity' is of course a word with a moral resonance, it is also a synonym of weight, and it appears that somehow during the last crisis people and their money evaporated, they were no longer important, no longer present, relegated to a limbo of inexistency.

What is commonly called "globalization" is a new form of repetition, where an identical product, or an identical productive process, is exported in different locations of the planet and then experienced simultaneously. *Fighting Gravity* is itself a "double exhibition" taking place at the same time in Moscow and London, questioning the meaning of opening a gallery with the same name and the same owner in two cities. Claire Fontaine uses the meteorological metaphor to approach the economical and social climate we live in. Knowing that the weather is also being brutally affected by our economical development, the sky - where for example the Russian authorities spread silver iodide to stop the rain during State celebrations - appears like a new battlefield and a densely colonized area.

Silver iodide monochrome paintings incriminate the supposedly neutral surface of abstraction as the inevitable receptacle of the struggle balance of our times, they display nothing but the yellow colour of the silver iodide and might recall Warhol's piss paintings, but they are absolutely inorganic. Next to them figurative paintings of Salter's rain machine portray the surreal shape of this ecological engine supposed to restore the CO2 balance in the atmosphere by creating clouds made out of evaporated ocean water. Another painting shows a section of Salter's sink, a highly ecological system supposed to stop hurricanes by channeling into vertical submersed pipes the warm water at the surface of the ocean towards the bottom of it.

On the façade of the gallery a neon sign is installed stating the name of the technician who fabricated it and the remuneration that he has received. The London gallery will exhibit a sign made in Moscow and the Moscow one will show a neon sign fabricated in London, so that the financial advantage coming from producing goods abroad and exporting them is totally obliterated through this process.

In the front room the *Sculptures Suspendues* (suspended sculptures), rotating synthetic plants, allude to the vicious circle of the artificial temporality of production. Encased in a gallery wall *Money Trap* is a safe deposit box with a

circular hole cut from the door – like the ones made to trap monkeys – allowing an open hand to enter but blocking a fist holding an object from getting out.

Fighting Gravity Moscow-London, London-Moscow (2010) displays the journey between these two cities filmed from the cockpit of a private jet and projected in real time on a double-sided screen. The abstract landscape of the sky underlines the shapeless and borderless temporality of business and the insignificance of distances when money and technology are there to reduce them. It also suggests the permanent danger of being far from the ground, prisoner of a fictitious heaven fuelled by oil, pollution and the violence of abusive privilege.

Parachute Doré (2010) is a sculpture complementary to the video projection. Using a metonymic process, the artist displays an open parachute made of golden silk, open and abandoned on the floor of the gallery, explicitly referring to the expression “golden parachute” used to designate the luxurious conditions reserved to the business men who have made serious mistakes and must leave the company they were working for.

The London exhibition will feature an artwork that will not be presented in Moscow: the silent video *Suicide Stack* (2010). Stack’s last words scroll on a black screen like movie credits, they describe the state of financial and sentimental desperation that pushed this 53 years old software engineer to fly a small airplane in the Austin IRS building, injuring a few people, killing one worker and himself. “I remember – writes Stack – reading about the stock market crash before the “great” depression and how there were wealthy bankers and businessmen jumping out of windows when they realized they screwed up and lost everything. Isn’t it ironic how far we’ve come in 60 years in this country that they now know how to fix that little economic problem; they just steal from the middle class (who doesn’t have any say in it, elections are a joke) to cover their asses and it’s “business-as-usual”. Now when the wealthy fuck up, the poor get to die for the mistakes... isn’t that a clever, tidy solution?”

Claire Fontaine, January 2011

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