

## PIOTR ŁAKOMY LIFE SIZE SHADOW

21 June - 21 July 2013

Silver-grey Styrofoam cut in all sorts of ways is the basic material for Piotr Łakomy's work. Taken almost directly from the street, it brings to mind connotations with construction, architecture, monuments and yet, despite its visual austerity, remains light and soft. When touched with a hand, it gives off heat, like a body. Following this track, Łakomy often makes the Styrofoam blocks the size of human beings. He literally cuts them at the height of a human being and juxtaposes with objects of everyday use, making sure that the relation of the grey shape to these objects should look quite 'natural'. When in the sculpture-performance *Blind Meeting* (2012) he placed on stands two lamps of high voltage so that they might bore through the Styrofoam block with the heat of light, this was, naturally, at the level of a head, or a gaze. Moreover, interestingly, because of a specific arrangement of particular elements, the sculpture itself resembled a human head with a headset on. The untitled installation from the *Makeshift* exhibition (2012) was composed of two pillars of Styrofoam that imitated the shape and size of a luxury fridge propped against a wall. In his *Untitled sculpture* (2012) in a cubic block of equal sides we can find one burnt corner, again at the level of a human face. The relations with the human body are distant, less evident, hidden in extensive blocks, but at the same time significant as they locate Łakomy's oeuvre in the context of minimal art which he easily relates to.

The previously characteristic use of spray paint in his sculpting studio has been recently replaced by work with light bulbs, which Łakomy makes use of either as a tool or as an integral element of his installation. The work *Observing Self* is a kind of unpractical sofa designed so that the two light bulbs of two different kinds set within it might be each other's "neighbours". The dialogue they enter into, flashing on and off in turns and casting shadows over each other, is automatic and literally programmed, yet unquestionably touching and poetic. We can identify here all the principal subjects addressed by the artist: meeting, communication effort, energy flow, and isolation. Interpersonal relations in Łakomy's work seem to look like collisions of two kinds of matter, hence the surfaces and blocks full of holes, charred edges and exposed damage. The underlying decision to express oneself by means of a limited number of elements is coupled with a passion for developing motifs, whose repository expands slowly, as if the artist felt the need to make sure that what he ultimately rejects has been used up to the full.

Łakomy's current interest in something as architecturally banal and fundamental as a corner is very much telling. Locating a series of his works in a corner or fitting his own aluminium constructions into existing venues, the artist takes the viewer aside, to a corner, and creates a semi-private situation. At the same time the word 'room' appears in the titles of the works. His most recent *Need Room* follows up on the aforementioned work and brings together the earlier elements in a modest-looking sculpture. Just like in *Observing Self*, different kinds of bulbs set in blocks of Styrofoam flash on and off, joining one another, remain lit for a while and then turn off at the same time. A simple yet profound sequence. The culmination of the energy contained within this work, although it finishes abruptly, progresses gently and we become aware of it only after a while, the way we usually belatedly notice some significant moments of our lives.

It is no doubt fit and proper that when writing about Łakomy's oeuvre one points to the motif of exhaustion since everything here is subject to destruction. However, this perspective calls for some additional comment. Perhaps Piotr erects ruined monuments of botched work or impossible relations, but this havoc is a result of vehement processes. In this sense Łakomy's work is drunken; this is first of all a result of some excess and second of all calls for a unique kind of perception. Suspending a gaze on a misty surface, highlighting obtrusive details and monotony, and playing with scale remind viewers of a state of raised temperature or other situations when – unable to fully control their own bodies – they have tried to find their bearings in reality or simply to find their way home.