

Press release
26.11.2011-21.01.2012

WILFREDO PRIETO
THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

"... And so the emperor walked in the parade under a magnificent canopy and all the people in the street and behind the windows said: "O lord, how unparalleled the emperor's clothes are, what a beautiful train his coat has! They fit like a glove!" No one wanted to show that he did not see anything, for then he would be no good for his position or would be very stupid. Never the emperor's clothes had been so successful." (Hans Christian Andersen, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, 1837)

Annet Gelink Gallery proudly presents its first solo exhibition by Wilfredo Prieto: *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Wilfredo Prieto (Sancti-Spiritus, Cuba, 1978) defies the boundaries of conceptual art with a group of new works brought together under the title of the well known nineteenth century fairy-tale by Hans Christian Andersen. With radical simplicity Prieto evokes questions of artistic intervention and the complexity of the everyday.

Just as in Andersen's fairy-tale, Prieto gives a new meaning to – almost – invisible objects. The apparent emptiness of the exhibition room is interrupted by *ready mades* and other obscure elements. Just like two medicine bottles of which one contains a venomous poison and the other the curing antidote, which cannot, however, be distinguished from each other. Literally all the media used are transparent: there is for instance a fish bowl and a crystal ball, there lies broken glass, a large cling film ball and a small sparkling diamond. A leak at the back of the exhibition on further reflection turns out to be a crying ceiling.

Wilfredo Prieto's oeuvre is characterised by extreme minimalism, sarcasm and self-mockery. Ferran Barenblit, director of the CA2M in Madrid, describes Prieto's approach: 'Perhaps one of Wilfredo Prieto's cleverest tactics is his apparent invisibility in the relation between the work of art and the spectator.' In particular that neutral approach, the limited interference of the artist, enables the spectator to interpret his works in their own way. Barenblit: 'As the artist himself regularly says: "Ideas exist in the real world, just like clouds. You can see them and catch them". In a certain way Prieto reminds us of the fact that everyone could have done what he did'. Prieto allows the spectator a range of possibilities, 'a space of unprecedented richness, and this is what makes art a colossal and indispensable human activity.' (Ferran Barenblit, 'The Straightest Line', in: Wilfredo Prieto. *Amarrado A La Pata De La Mesa*, 2011.)

In *The Emperor's New Clothes*, Prieto mercilessly wipes the floor with preconceived ideas, addressing the rules of society. He challenges the spectators to open up their own vision, just as the child in the fairy-tale who as only one dares to say: "But he doesn't wear anything!"

Wilfredo Prieto lives and works in New York. He studied at the Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, and had residencies at Gasworks (London), Le Grand Cafe (St. Nazaire, France), John Simon Guggenheim Foundation (New York) and the Kadist Art Foundation (Paris). He had amongst others recent solo exhibitions at CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo in Madrid, S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Dia Art Foundation in New York, Kadist Art Foundation in Paris and Centro de Arte Contemporaneo Wilfredo Lam in Havana. His work was included in numerous group exhibitions, such as the 29th Sao Paulo Biennale (2010), I'm not here at De Appel Arts Centre (Amsterdam, 2010), Stowaways at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts (San Francisco, 2009) and That was then, this is now at P.S.1 MoMA (New York, 2008). Wilfredo Prieto received the Cartier Foundation Award (Frieze, London, 2008) and the 2000 UNESCO Prize for the Promotion of the Arts (7th Havana Biennial, Group DUPP, Havana, 2000).

Art Basel Miami Beach From 1-4 December we will participate in Art Basel Miami Beach at the Art Nova section with new works by Carlos Amorales, Ryan Gander and Wilfredo Prieto. **David Maljkovic** From 2 December until 5 February 2012 David Maljkovic's solo show *Exhibitions for Secession* is on view at the Secession in Vienna. **Marijke van Warmerdam** At the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam Marijke van Warmerdam's is exhibition *Dichtbij in de verte* on view until 22 January. **Erik Wesselo** The exhibition *Zand* with new films and photos by Erik Wesselo is on view at the Fotomuseum from 26 November until 15 January 2012. **Sarah van Sonsbeeck** is shortlisted for the Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs 2012. De other shortlisted artists are Rory Pilgrim, Tala Madani, Charlotte Dumas en David Jablonowski. The winner will be announced in spring 2012. New work by Sarah van Sonsbeeck is on view at the Uitvaartmuseum until 1 July 2012. **Dick Verdult** Dick Verdult's show *En op zondag vierden we vrijdag* is on view at the Van Abbemuseum until 8 January 2012. 17 december: film screening and performance by Dick Verdult. **Ryan Gander** Until 29 januari 2012 the exhibition *Icarus Falling. An exhibition lost by Ryan Gander* is on view at Maison Hermes in Tokyo. **Carlos Amorales** Currently Carlos Amorales' exhibition related to his residency is on view at MACVAL in Vitry-sur-Seine. **Yael Bartana** The Polish film trilogy *...And Europe will be stunned* is on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Canada from 25 January t/m 12 April.