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24 JUNE - 3 AUGUST 2012

“We do not start from human beings, those latecomers, nor from language, a more recent arrival still. The world of meaning and the world of being are one and the same world, that of translation, substitution, delegation, passing. We shall say that any other definition of essence is ‘devoid of meaning’; in fact, it is devoid of the means to remain in presence, to last. All durability, all solidity, all permanence will have to be paid for by its mediators. It is this exploration of a transcendence without a contrary that makes our world so very unmodern, with all those nuncios, mediators, delegates, fetishes, machines, figurines, instruments, representatives, angels, lieutenants, spokespersons and cherubim. What sort of world is it that obliges us to take into account, at the same time and in the same breath, the nature of things, technologies, sciences, fictional beings, religions large and small, politics, jurisdictions, economies and unconsciousnesses? Our own, of course. That world ceased to be modern when we replaced all essences with the mediators, delegates and translators that gave them meaning. That is why we do not yet recognize it. It has taken on an ancient aspect, with all those delegates, angels and lieutenants.”

- Bruno Latour We Have Never Been Modern 1993

Taking its title from the Mesopotamian city of Ur, the summer exhibition on view at Room East considers the unmodern, that ancient, enduring quality of art, which transcends contemporaneity and incants origins and prophecies, rituals and rebellions. The title of the show also refers to the German prefix 'ur-', as in 'ur-text', a term used in literary theory to refer to an origin text. Insofar as any idea has an origin--albeit impossible to fully reconstruct--all materials have uses prior to their value in the making of art, whether it be wood, metal, fabric, ceramic, paint, paper, or ink.

The works in this group exhibition were selected because of their archaeological undertones, their appropriation of materials, their reference to prior points of artistic practice, and their layers of the handmade. Each in its own way is an attempt at eking out some ineluctable truth whether that kernel of knowledge be hidden in the history of language, the development of images as objects, the failure of various artistic tropes, or the duplicity of an object that serves both form and function and neither simultaneously. The unstated goal is to present an excavated tomb, one that is filled with archetypal treasures, the origins of which may be felt but cannot be known.

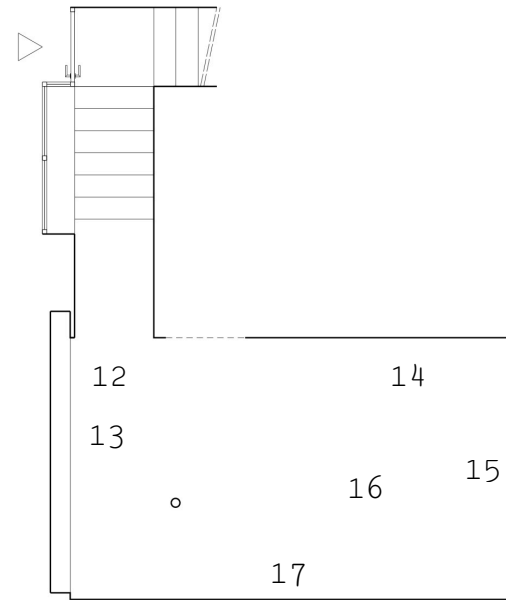
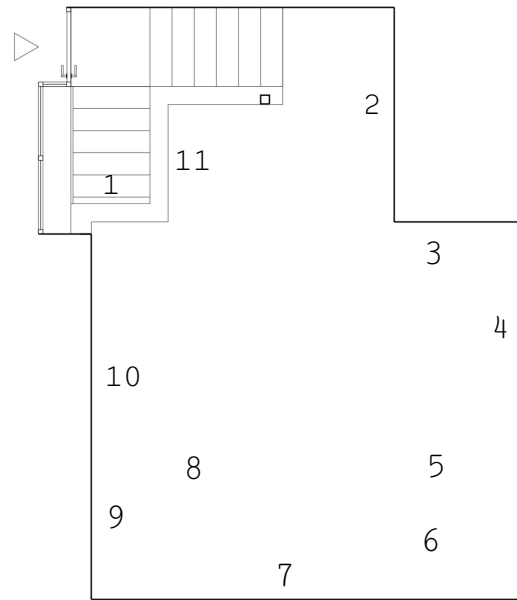
LARRY BAMBURG / SEBASTIAN BLACK / ROBIN CAMERON / ETIENNE CHAMBAUD / RYAN FOERSTER / LUKAS GERONIMAS / LUCAS KNIPSCHER / AJAY KURIAN / AGNES LUX / JUSTIN MATHERLY / ALEXANDER MAY / MAMIKO OTSUBO / RYAN E. STEADMAN / ARTIE VIERKANT

ROOM EAST  
41 Orchard Street  
New York, NY 10002

info@roomeast.com  
+1 212 226 7108  
roomeast.com

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Upstairs:

(1) SEBASTIAN BLACK  
Period piece (...) 2012  
Enamel on engraved dibond  
16 X 10 inches

(2) RYAN E. STEADMAN  
Goons Against Boors 2011  
oil on canvas  
10 x 8.25 x 1.5 inches

(3) MAMIKO OTSUBO  
Brass Sun 2009  
polished brass, stainless steel  
84 x 0.5 x 4.5 inches

(4) JUSTIN MATHERLY  
But only to see his merits acknowledged, and existence assured to him (purple squares) 2011  
inkjet monoprint, spray paint  
19 x 19 inches

(5) ROBIN CAMERON  
The Disappointment 2012  
ceramic, metal, wood base  
12 x 6 x 4 inches

(6) ROBIN CAMERON  
The Foil 2012  
ceramic, metal, wood base  
12 x 6 x 4 inches

(7) AJAY KURIAN  
Hendiadys 2011  
ghee, gold dust on linen  
diptych, 54 X 40 inches each

(8) ARTIE VIERKANT  
Image Object Flat Proof Monday 26 March 2012 10:45AM 2012  
6-pass UV print on sintra  
54 X 14 inches

(9) RYAN FOERSTER  
The Sky is Falling 3 2012  
printing plate  
35 x 23 inches

(10) ETIENNE CHAMBAUD  
Contre-dépouille (Undercut) 2012  
springbok hide stretched on canvas  
21 x 14 x 1 inches

(11) LUCAS KNIPSCHER  
Yawn 2012  
felt, ceramic  
dimensions variable

Downstairs:

(12) RYAN FOERSTER  
Bird 2001 - 2012  
silver gelatin print  
8 x 10 inches

(13) RYAN FOERSTER  
Double Cross 2010  
silver gelatin print  
8 x 10 inches

(14) LARRY BAMBURG  
Bone Stack #38, Chicken Turkey Pig, Shown in Mint Fizz, Tent-poled 2012  
bones, resin wedge, glass, paint, tape, elastic cord, 2 screws  
35.25 x 10.25 x 6 inches

(15) ALEXANDER MAY  
Circle Side 2012  
spray enamel on MDF  
84 x 64 inches

(16) SEBASTIAN BLACK  
Secure arrangement 2 2012  
Elevator safety mirror and ultracal  
approx 6 x 7 x 10 inches each

(17) AGNES LUX  
Kate #2 2012  
postcards, tape, steel rod, magnets  
77 x 120.5 inches

Window:

LUKAS GERONIMAS  
A Material Triptych : Geronimas' hooks; Ryan's shirt; - | 2012  
wood, cotton, canvas, black dye, gold leaf, waxed string, metal weight  
dimensions variable