

**Matts Leiderstam, Life Masks, 22 November 2014 – 25 January 2015**

Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam is very proud to host Matts Leiderstam (1956, lives and works in Stockholm) for his third solo exhibition at the gallery. His new show *Life Masks* consists of combinations of paintings and photographs, presented as little installations, and representing the portraits of 16th century oil paintings culled from important collections while cruising their depots. The installations are presented in an unusual way, for example perpendicular to the wall, showing a sandwich of two photos of the painting; the front and the back with the registration labels, which are normally hidden. Or a portrait, which is extended to the floor, complete with a 'dress' on an easel-like construction.

The old paintings show unknown people portrayed by unknown 16th Century masters and are brought to the surface again by Leiderstam. Making them alive, giving them a body, they become protagonists in an encounter with the visitor and where the gallery space becomes a stage set. Three of these old paintings are from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and are the subject of more than a century of art investigation. The connoisseurship of famous art historians, like Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929), is at stake when they, as specialists, are attributing the same work to different painters. Looking at these portraits becomes a fetishistic act of finding the 'master', or maybe a desire of a more sexual nature is evoked when our gaze into the portrait 'en face' is returned by a beautiful man or woman. Or do we see the gaze of the painter?

Matts Leiderstam's practice is informed by our cultural ways of seeing. How we, for example, perceive unspoiled nature through our 'cultural glasses', causes it to become a depiction; a 'landscape' and how this seeing is influenced for many centuries, by artists delivering artistic interpretations of our environment. Leiderstam's work questions the intrinsic value of artworks and how museums assign importance to specific pieces. Issues of provenance and attribution are part of his investigations. He appropriates older works from the biotope of the art museum and involves them in his own artistic practice, and thus through the visual experience of his art he makes us a companion in his personal fascinations.

Recent shows include: Berlin Biennale 2014 (DE), Bregenzer Kunstverein (AT), Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo (ME), Gasworks London (UK), Witte de With Rotterdam (NL), Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art (SE), 2010 at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (DE), the Malmö Art Museum (SE), Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (AT) and the Turku Art Museum Turku (FI). 2008 at the Salon Museum of Contemporary Art (Belgrade) and 2007 at the Badischer Kunstverein (DE). His project, Grand Tour, was shown at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall (SE) 2005, after which it traveled to Dundee Contemporary Arts (Scotland), Göteborgs Konsthall (SE) and Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (Vaduz).

The opening will take place on Saturday, November 22nd, between 5-7 pm and the show runs until January 25th 2015. Also on November 22nd we will open a new group show, *Homing II* at the '4th Floor'. The gallery is open Friday-Sunday 1-6 pm and by appointment. For further information and visuals, please contact the gallery: [office@wilfriedlentz.com](mailto:office@wilfriedlentz.com) or +31 (0)10 4126459.