

Marianne Vitale

Too Much Satan For One Hand

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IBID PROJECTS

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For her second solo exhibition at IBID PROJECTS, New York artist Marianne Vitale presents 4 large-scale sculptures taking over 3 floors of the gallery. *Too Much Satan For One Hand* illustrates a new body of work taking its starting point from the idea of the American Frontier.

Marianne Vitale's multi-disciplinary practice combines sculpture, film and video, theatre and drawing. Cultivating a considered aesthetic of absurdity, her work often functions as parody of cultural production, broaching a wide array of subjects in an attempt to escape classification.

Wood beams, posts and boards taken from the floors, walls and ceilings of old factories and warehouses throughout New York— is sourced from scrap yards and reconfigured into sculptural replicas of objects and structures reminiscent of its historical origins. With the help of historical imagery, outhouses, false fronts, barns, jail cells and other architectural elements of America's Old West are reconstructed with traditional, often long abandoned techniques. The reclaimed lumber, once primary building material and a lynchpin in the country's industrialization, is left untreated and shows the remains of a hundred-plus years of wear and tear. With its weathering, dirt, markings, footprints and rusty nails, it serves as signifier of authenticity to the country's mythologized past and helps to turn these objects into nostalgic and lonely monuments to that long-gone and overly glorified pre-modern era in its' annals.

Jail (2011) is a 6 x 6 x 6 ft cube comprised of heavy, weathered wooden beams, piled to create an old technique of "butt-and-pass" corners. There is no way in or out of the chamber, only a small window, with silver bars allow a peak into, or out of, the darkness. Based on a specific bridge truss design from the late 1800's, *Burned Bridge* (2011), a 16 foot-long sculpture of a Northeast American covered bridge, was built and then set aflame, leaving behind a frail, charred skeleton.

On the gallery's top floor sit two 16 ft-long (4.8 m) sculptures, *Torpedo (1)* and *Torpedo (2)*, (2011). Also built primarily out of old wood, boards were freshly ripped thin, to fit the curved shape, as that of a wooden barrel, though here elongated into torpedo form. The design is loosely based on early water missile renderings from the late 1800's.

Elsewhere in the exhibition, two diptychs, *Tongue & Groove* (2010), are comprised from a pile of "tongue and groove" boards, dismantled from a Manhattan factory. Perhaps more than the other works these "paintings" (as they become, hung flat on wall), communicate most explicitly the depth and history of the "reclaimed" material from which they are composed. Drippings of tar and cork and oils on the "floor side" were perhaps once under a work station of heavy machinery. The flip-side (literally) is that of a ceiling, which makes up the other diptych; markings from where structural beams were attached, and a faded coat of white paint lends a painterly pattern, now puzzled together.

Finally, a series of small canvases, *Too Much Satan For One Hand* (2011), depict a printed image of the artist's arms and fists gesturing a "satan" symbol, collaged with handwritten drawings, texts and markings.

Literal reconstructions that purposefully confounds their origins, Vitale's work proposes a flawed representation of history and a hybridised rhetoric that leaves the viewer confronted with a confusing sense of longing and identification with the mythology and hysterics of a time when an agrarian society turned into an industrialized society.

The artist's book, *What I Need To Do Is Lighten the Fuck Up About a Lot of Shit* (2011), has been published on occasion of the exhibition and is available at the gallery.

Marianne Vitale (b. 1973) graduated from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 1995. She has participated in group shows including Whitney Biennale 2010, The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, *Are You Glad To Be In America?*, Massimo De Carlo, Milan, IT (2011), *How Soon Now*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, US (2010), *The Perpetual Dialogue*, Andrea Rosen Gallery, NY (2009) and SUBJECT | MATTER, Cass Sculpture Foundation, UK (2009). Recent solo exhibitions include *The Clipper*, White Slab Palace, NY, presented by Kunstverein, NY, *Landswab Over Berberis*, Sculpture Center, New York (2009), OK/KO (as part of Performa '09), White Columns, NY (2009). Upcoming solo shows include Performa, NY (2011), Zach Feuer, NY (2012) and UKS, Oslo, Norway, 2012.

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