

Tobias Madison
PRESS



Review: Feedback, Karma International, 2012
By Gabrielle Schaad

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Tobias Madison

ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND

Karma International



Tobias Madison, *Feedback*, 2012, Installation view

For *Feedback* – Tobias Madison’s first solo gallery exhibition – the artist presented collaborative installations, as he had done at Munich’s Kunstverein in 2010 in the show *Do It To Do It* and earlier this year at Berlin’s Haubrok Collection in *Fatuma Osman*. A handout – part instructions for a performance, part list of works – was lying on a small table at the entrance. Madison composed this text in the form of a poem and paid tribute to artists like Kaspar Müller, Emanuel Rossetti and Emil Michael Klein. References to Pamela Rosenkranz and Thomas Sauter highlighted the gallery’s function as a social structure, since both these artists are also represented by Karma International.

Blue-painted lamps and energy-saving bulbs – attached in makeshift, parasitic fashion to the disconnected gallery lighting system – cast a dim glow (*Kaspar Müller; Kaspar Müller & Emanuel Rossetti; Gutai Home Videos, celebratory Feedback and more, Villa Alcohol and Cigarettes, keep the kids off the streets, under the sea there is so much you can see, 2012, Feedback, 2012*). The video *Feedback* (2012) – projected twice in different sizes on the walls and a central pillar – shows several people tripping clumsily around the gallery space when they were setting up the video projector and camera that now replays the resulting footage. While details of bodies, technical installation and textile wall hangings alternated and overlapped, a deafening interference noise repeatedly broke through the otherwise subtly accentuated experimental film and its rhythm of sound, lighting and editing. The blue lamps produced a ‘day for night’ effect.

All of the props featured in the video were set up in the exhibition’s projection cabin as a kind of film set: a tatty taffeta rug spattered with blue paint along with printed scraps of cloth or pieces cut from a projection screen (also *Feedback, 2012*). According to the work list, these props were made using leftovers from collaborative,

non-commercial art projects

(Othello Club, an exhibition pavilion; and AP News, a cinema and concert venue).

The exhibition showed Madison's work as a large-scale installation with many interwoven layers aiming to escape commercial viability, expectations of authorship and, above all, the gallery's label.

Besides these allusions to the artist's own activities, there were also historical references: the blue-painted lamps and the handout pointed to an adaptation of François Truffaut's *La Nuit américaine* (*Day For Night*, 1973), a film about the production of the fictional studio feature *Je vous présente Pamela* (*Meet Pamela*). The feedback loop between the video and the exhibition space established a network of connections that focused attention on art world players, their roles and harnessing a social and artistic network. But is it really possible for an artist to criticize mechanisms for the exploitation of collaborative works by laying claim to the principle of collaboration? Does the potential position of power here (the object of the work's critique) really lie exclusively with the gallery? Or does it come into being in the interplay between all of those involved, including Madison and his collaborators? Finally, Madison himself was drawn into the feedback loop of his own exhibition: not only as an artist-curator and an impresario but also in his role as the *enfant terrible* provoking a conflict with the art system of late capitalism.

Translated by Nicholas Grindell

—by *Gabrielle Schaad*

