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Mark Jenkins
THE STUDIO

EXPOSITION PRÉSENTÉE DANS LE CADRE DE LA SAISON **NOUVELLES VAGUES DU**
PALAIS DE TOKYO 

Curator Stéphane Chatry

June 22nd – July 20th 2013
Opening Saturday June 22nd from 2pm to 8pm

By Marguerite Pilven

Mark Jenkins has been placing his incongruous sculptures on city sidewalks all over the world for approximately ten years. The street furniture is used as a pedestal and starting point for the statues he builds, molding live models he then dresses in neutral clothes so that they merge into the flow of passers-by, unnoticed. A man plunged head first into a bin, another man kneeling in front of a woman's clothing shop window, bodies tied up in bin bags and left on the sidewalk like a Christmas tree after end-of-the-year celebrations. These are just some of the grotesque scenarios that are put together by the artist; just enough to disturb the flow of indifferent passersby, causing surprise, trouble and laughter. Jenkins is self-taught but despite not attending art schools he says the Juan Muñoz sculptures he discovered at the Hirshhorn Museum had a great influence on his work. Above all, Jenkins gives a new voice to a criticism of consumerism that started in the seventies by artists using the human body as a medium to embody its alienation. Duane Hanson is one of the most exemplary: the motionless figures he stages seem deserted of all interiority. Their empty eyes doesn't even express boredom, they convey an abyssal void. Jenkins goes even further with models whose faces are often absent. If we can recognize in Hanson or George Segal some kind of awkwardness linked to a tension between appearances and existential emptiness, Mark Jenkins forgets any kind of psychological approach. Despondent, crushed, abandoned to their fate, the staged bodies are inert objects, puppets with no trace of subjectivity. Mark Jenkins prefers mockery than the realistic and deliberately common situations staged by his predecessors, he therefore relates more naturally to Erwin Wurm.

Since the 1980s and the end of ideologies, impertinence and the absurd reveal themselves to be more efficient in order to disintegrate the fortification of individualism. As for a carnival, Mark Jenkins wants to break taboos: he withdraws the tensions and reveals what people think and lack courage to talk about. Jenkins addresses the city-dwellers' anger, their frustration linked to solitude, instability, and poor housing. His public space interventions are a play upon this backdrop of uneasiness. Rather than just releasing a message, Jenkins wants to yield reaction and revive interactions.

The Mark Jenkins show (a first in France) will include an exclusive series of sculptures. His work will also be simultaneously spreading out into the city and creating a dialogue between public and private spaces.

"Exhibition organized as part of the season Nouvelles Vagues Palais de Tokyo with the support of the Professional Committee of Art Galleries."

MEMBRE DU COMITE DES GALERIES D'ART

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