

**JOHN BOCK**  
**The Big Sleep**

**13 October – 21 November 2009**  
**9 Balfour Mews London W1**

John Bock's new show with Sadie Coles HQ takes the form of an installation of seven new sculptures. The opening night of the show will feature a six minute performance repeated between 6-8pm. The walls of the Balfour Mews gallery space have been saturated with colour to house Bock's absurdist and theatrical assemblages. Concocted from familiar household objects – a suitcase, cushions, an empty bottle – the works have a peculiarly machine-like appearance, and form sculptural analogies to Freud's mechanistic conception of the human psyche.



*Strampellümmel* – a cat's cradle of pulleys and struts on top of a table – vaguely evokes the reels of a film projector or sewing machine, while ultimately evading easy, associative interpretation. *The Dead Eyes of London*, which takes its name from a German melodramatic crime film of 1965, consists of a simple wooden cabinet that has been turned into a perplexing mutant object, a hollow box with a smashed-through screen.

Excising objects from their normal contexts to form nonsensical aggregates, Bock's sculptures are strongly resonant of Dada – notably Kurt Schwitters's *Merz* paintings with their bolted together rubbish and driftwood – as well as Surrealism's tendency for irrational juxtaposition, and the anti-aesthetic assemblage art of the mid twentieth century. Several of Bock's titles are nonsense composites of real words – *Fingernagelzwillingszeit* (meaning 'fingernail twin time') – mirroring the hybridised form of the works themselves.

Bock's sculptures frequently serve as props within his elaborate performances and video works, which have a pervasive 'Theatre of the Absurd' aspect. In their embodiment of the histrionic theatricality of Bock's other work, these pieces constitute the elements of an unbounded *gesamtkunstwerk*. And yet there is also an entropic undercurrent to each of the sculptures – they seem broken, or impossibly fragile and teetering on the brink of collapse.

John Bock was born in Gribbohm, Germany, in 1965. He studied at the Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg, Germany. Recent solo shows include *Palms* at Red Cat, Los Angeles, in 2008; *John Bock : 2 handbags in a pickle*, INSA Art Space, Korea, in 2008; and *John Bock. Films*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, in 2007. He has had major exhibitions in numerous museums and galleries worldwide including a solo show at Frac Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, Marseille, France, 2005. He has participated in various group shows including *Martian Museum of Terrestrial Art*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, and *Laughing in a Foreign Language*, Hayward Gallery, London, both in 2008. *John Bock: Maltreated Frigate*, a monograph of his work, was published by Walther Koenig Ltd, 2007. John Bock lives and works in Berlin.

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 Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 10 – 6pm