

Vincent Szarek Hi Fi Chassis

Vincent Szarek's work reveals a myriad of influences from custom car culture, and minimalist finish fetishism, to monochrome abstraction. These influences are a result of his unique background. While attending RISD, Szarek worked at an automotive body shop where he was exposed to car culture. At the auto body shop, engrossed by the labor intensive finishes, saturated color, and smooth surfaces, Szarek learned first hand to seamlessly incorporate materials and fabrication processes associated with cars and surfboards into his art practice.

The works in this exhibition can be read as both embracing and critiquing America's fascination with slick "sparkly" surfaces, ostentatious wealth, and salacious voyeurism. Szarek will be presenting 4 sculptures that provoke a dialogue with Olivier Mosset's black paintings exhibited next door at Leo Koenig Inc. Satisfying both Mosset's impulse for the collaborative gesture, and Szarek's own ideas about consumerist display. The two exhibitions are meant to deflect and inform one another and exemplify both artists' affinity for the monochrome.

Anchoring the show is a wall hanging made of gold sequins that declare "The Meaning Of Life." The phrase, in this incarnation, is culled from the chorus from a country music song by Tom T. Hall, in which a cowboy explains to a poet that the meaning of life is "faster horses, older whiskey, younger women, more money." The sequins are forever undulating, propelled by fans directed onto them at all times, starkly reflecting off of a background of matte black emptiness. On the floor Szarek has created a facsimile of both a traditional "minimal sculpture" and a readymade. The shape is easily recognizable as an ordinary parking block, encased in gold metalflake. Utility and decadance abide in a single form.

A sculpture of a pair of cherries is realized in black with gold stems. The perfect spheres reflect everything around them, initiating a refrain with the space. The berries are exactly the same, cast from the same mold, and Szarek sees them as serial monochromes. The double cherry is the kitsch image of tattoos, stickers and slot machines. Employing a Koonsian approach, Szarek uses the clichéd image as a searing lens, inversely representing middle-class American values. The end quote of the show is a pseudo-Roman column. Again, the object is a monochrome...for the drug trafficker. Smoothly stylized and glossy black, it is an image of an old ruin that is not one. Brand new and perfect, the column becomes an emblem, a "classical" reference ubiquitous to the narco-nuevo riche. "Szarek remarks, "if you google search 'narco palace' they all use classical elements that are clearly fake." The sculpture becomes an Americanized icon to an empire in decline, filled with denial, and created with the finish of our beloved auto industry. The artist lives and works in New York City.