

Peter Wächtler

B.A.C.K.

January 20 - Extended to February 24, 2013

Opening: Sunday, January 20, 3-6pm

MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38 is pleased to present Peter Wächtler's first exhibition in the United States. *B.A.C.K.* features a new work by the artist, produced in collaboration with Kunsthalle Wien:

A projected animation film starring a bachelor rat enacts typical cartoon vocabulary in a short sequence that repeats over and over with slight variations as a voiceover soundtrack unfolds. The fragmented narrative resembles a catalogue of titles or previews rather than a story, and the recounted episodes, ranging from the most hollowed-out cliché to the embarrassingly idiosyncratic, don't add up to one single, unitary subject of that experience. Evoking cinema, how-to manuals, or the working class iconography of Bruce Springsteen, the performance oscillates between ironic distanciation and dead seriousness.

Wächtler's work perverts the animated cartoon genre as much as it adapts it. It portrays the social formation only in absentia, focusing on the sole protagonist in his claustrophobic, private enclosure. And while repetition of modular elements has always been central to the economy of animation, this labor-reducing device is usually concealed, in order not to interfere with the illusion of linear narrative progression. Wächtler's rat loops ostentatiously. Mechanically repeating ad nauseam, fate turns into slapstick and only therein conveys the horror of an administrated world.

Emphatically and poetically inhabiting different genres, but at the same time applying devices such as exaggeration, deadpan humor, an excessive vividness, and a decidedly German use of the English language, Peter Wächtler generates an uncomfortable tension between distance and identification. At a moment when narrating experiences seems more important than having them, and when such narrating takes on increasingly bureaucratic forms, the work thus foregrounds the function of different narrative techniques and traditions as means of rationalizing one's place in the world, of grappling with and giving meaning to one's existence.

Peter Wächtler (*1979, Hannover) lives and works in Brussels. Recent solo exhibitions include *Studium Maximum* at Reisebüroalerie Diko-Reisen, Cologne (2012); *Das Kino im Alten Mühlenviertel*, Galerie Lars Friedrich, Berlin (2012); and *The Set*, Etablissement d'en Face, Brussels (2011). He has also shown in group exhibitions such as *Un-Scene II*, Wiels Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brussels (2012); *Anfang gut. Alles Gut.*, Basso, Berlin, and Kunsthaus Bregenz (2011); *Melanchotopia*, Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2011); and Herzliya Biennial, Herzliya (2011). Peter Wächtler is a member of Etablissement d'en Face and a co-founder of the exhibition space Sotoso in Brussels.

Work on view:

Untitled, 2013, HD video, color, sound, 14 minutes; ink and color pencil on Xerox, 27.75 in x 18 in.

Peter Wächtler: *B.A.C.K.* is curated by Jakob Schillinger.