

## BRAND NEW GALLERY

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presents

### JOHANNES VANDERBEEK

13 May – 1 June 2011

Opening: 13 May, 6pm – 9pm

Brand New Gallery is proud to announce *Thunder, Ground, Sky*, the first solo exhibition in Europe by the New York-based artist Johannes VanDerBeek (Baltimore, 1982). The exhibition comprises three correlated series of works which allude to the three natural elements mentioned in the title. *Thunder*, which, with its rumblings, encouraged humanity to build walls as protection against the forces of nature, here inspires a series of large sculptures like brick walls; *Ground*, the point of contact with our planet which allows us to feel the gravity of our collective history, is the inspiration for a second series of sculptures in the shape of ancestral heads, modelled on the surface of the artist's studio floor; *Sky*, which looms over our conscience as an endless mirror reflecting our ceaseless struggle to be eternal, is the inspiration for a third series, two-dimensional works with a silver shine. Within these three series, there is a sense of continuous mental space that can be constructed through single objects, creating a portrait of both the individual who produced them and the world which inspired them.

These series of works incorporate materials and textures that are constantly present in our collective understanding of physicality. Through the processes of sculpture and painting their identity is set into a state of change. Wood and brick, universally known for their features of flatness and rigidity, are plied and curved in impossible ways. The structural connections between surfaces and volumes are altered when planks of wood are curved and become wrinkled like skin, to become the heads of kings and queens. Silhouettes of brick walls as thin as paper are set on the gallery walls like the signs of an unknown alphabet. The composition of the ever-changing sky is represented on boards with signs of fingerprints and marks in a material that shines like metal. These forms begin to be like figures located inside the room, creating a deceptive scene where stability and illusion exchange glances.

During our lifetimes, we come into contact with surfaces which can be recognized as solid, soft, hard, strong or fragile and we base our behaviour on these conventional properties. However, through the distortions of our thought, these qualities can be changed and become part of an interior mental scene which is more illuminating. The works in this exhibition have been created to capture this transformation.

Johannes VanDerBeek was born in Baltimore in 1982, he lives and works in New York. An artist and curator, he is the son of artist Stan and brother of photographer Sara. He graduated from The Cooper Union in 2004. His works have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in museums, public spaces and galleries including PS1 MoMA (New York), Tang Museum at Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs), Metro Tech Center, Brooklyn (New York), Portugal Arte 10 Biennial (Lisbon) and Zach Feuer Gallery (New York). His works are also part of public and private collections in Europe and the USA.

### *Johannes VanDerBeek*

13 May – 1 June 2011

### Brand New Gallery

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open Tuesday - Saturday

11.00am-1.00pm; 2.30pm-7.00pm

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### Catalogue

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