

KOEN VAN DEN BROEK: APEX
April 25–May 24, 2013
Opening reception: Thursday, April 25, 6-8 PM

Friedman Benda will present Belgian artist Koen van den Broek's second solo exhibition with the gallery, titled *Apex*, from April 25–May 24, 2013. In this body of large-scale work van den Broek uses the history of his own paintings as a reference point and conceives fresh commentaries on abstraction. He formally resolves his signature tension between the photographic and the painterly, transcending from referential and cerebral to the experiential and spiritual. A reception will be held for the artist, on April 25, from 6-8 p.m. at Friedman Benda, 515 West 26th Street.

A trained architect, van den Broek uses light, shape, and repetition to build generic structures, be it natural or man-made, through layering and the application of vibrant colors. Shadows cast by anonymous buildings, cracks in sun baked pavement, and lonely overpass bridges suggest human presence and a narrative long past. His preference for the casual and reflective aligns with Edward Hopper and Wayne Thiebaud.

Known for employing photographic images taken on road trips as the basis for his work - from Belgium to Tokyo, Chicago, Los Angeles and beyond —with this new series van den Broek abandons this alibi, and with it, the inherent distancing and melancholic effects. Instead, he samples the 20th and 21st century, as seen through his own eyes, invoking Abstract Expressionism in the vein of Clyfford Still infused with the self-conscious and self-referential characteristics of American Conceptualism.

The flattened and skewed perspective in *Torque*, emphasize a repetition of forms familiar in van den Broek's work—pavement cracks, street division lines, and the shadows of electrical posts—seemingly alluding to a coded message. Yet the work is gestural, active, and of the moment. A reverberation of presence is no longer tangible in *Apex* and the ambiguous mood of his earlier work shifts to optimism.

Koen van den Broek (b.1973) lives and works in Belgium. He has a Bachelor in Architectural Engineering, and studied at The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp, the Academy of Visual Arts St. Joost, Breda, and the Higher Institute of Fine Arts Flanders, Antwerp. He is currently an instructor at the MAD faculty in Hasselt, Belgium.

The artist's work is in significant private collections and the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Astrup Fearnley Museet for Modern Kunst, Oslo, Norway; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; The Leeum Collection at the Samsung Museum of Modern Art, Seoul, Korea; S.M.A.K, Ghent, Belgium, and MUHKA, Antwerp, Belgium. Van den Broek has been in many museum exhibitions in Belgium including in Antwerp, at the MAS and at the MHKA. In 2008, Van den Broek collaborated with John Baldessari on "This an Example of That," an exhibition at the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht. In 2009, he was the subject of an extensive retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK) at which point, "Crack," a monograph on his work, was published.

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