

A rough guide to Hell

SOCIÉTÉ RÉALISTE

Curated by Prem Krishnamurthy and Niels Van Tomme

Exhibition Dates: Sept 5 – Oct 27, 2013

Opening Reception: Thursday, Sept 5, 6–8pm

P! presents the first solo exhibition in New York City by Paris-based French-Hungarian cooperative Société Réaliste. “A rough guide to Hell” spans several of Société Réaliste’s recent works revolving around figures and forms of capitalist utopianism. Pitting two discrete discursive investigations against each other — the typographic language of global-local media communications and the architecture of anarcho-capitalist modernism — the exhibition resolves into a singularly strange and unsettling total installation.

“A rough guide to Hell” premieres a new typeface. Combining the logotypes of international newspapers that include geographic locators in their names, *media police* (2013) is a Frankensteinian font that belies its diverse origins through a fractured assemblage. All communications about the show use the typeface; this includes the storefront awning signage, which hijacks a quotation from Dante’s *Inferno*. A new room-sized piece, *Circles of Errors* (2013), introduces a recursive poetic text of common computer error messages. The *media police* font will be available for free download at p-exclamation.org for the duration of the exhibition.

The second axis of the show revolves around Ayn Rand and her provocative political and spatial philosophies. *The fountainhead* (2010) is a 111-minute long appropriation of the 1949 feature film written by Rand. While the original film lionized New York as the stronghold of the brave, free world, Société Réaliste have digitally removed all human characters to present an empty narrative. Transforming the film’s heroic buildings into its sole protagonists, this intervention turns Rand’s original view into a nightmarish vision of capitalism’s architecture.

The final work in the exhibition, *Laissez-faire City* (2013), is a new proposal based on a 1995 advertisement published in *The Economist*. The original full-page ad promoted investment in a speculative city in Costa Rica, based on Ayn Rand’s principles of self-rule and the rugged free-market. *Laissez-faire City* will be on sale in the exhibition for the price of \$62,124.75 (£40,050). This cost covers re-publishing the ad in today’s edition of *The Economist* — a quixotic memorial to capitalism’s idealistic moment.

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Société Réaliste

Société Réaliste is a Paris-based cooperative created by Ferenc Gróf and Jean-Baptiste Naudy in 2004. Developing exhibitions, publications and conferences, Société Réaliste works with political design, experimental economy, territorial ergonomics, and social engineering consulting. From 2011–2012, its large monographic exhibition project, “Empire, State, Building,” was presented at Jeu de Paume (Paris), Ludwig Museum (Budapest), and the National Museum of Contemporary Art (Bucharest). This year, Société Réaliste has presented its work as solo exhibitions in Paris (“Thelema of Nations,” Galerie Jérôme Poggi) and Athens (“The Shape of Orders to Come,” Salon de Vortex), as well as in group exhibitions in Dresden, Brussels, Rome, Thessaloniki, Budapest, Paris, and Aachen.

<http://www.societerealiste.net/>

P!

P! is a multidisciplinary exhibition space located in New York’s Chinatown. Directed and curated by Prem Krishnamurthy, P! proposes an experimental space of display in which the radical possibilities of disparate disciplines, historical periods, and modes of production rub elbows. A free-wheeling combination of project space, commercial gallery, and Mom-and-Pop-Kunsthalle, P! engages with presentation strategies and models to emphasize rupture over tranquility, interference over mere coexistence, transparency over obfuscation, and passion over cool remove.

Since opening in September 2012, the space and its exhibitions with Åbäke, Thomas Brinkmann, Katarina Burin, Christine Hill, Oliver Laric, Karel Martens, Sarah Oppenheimer, Amie Siegel, and others have been covered by *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *Art in America*, *Modern Painters*, *Design Observer*, *The New York Times*, and *The New Yorker*.

<http://p-exclamation.org/>

Niels Van Tomme

Niels Van Tomme is a New York-based curator and critic whose exhibition projects are shown internationally. He currently works at the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture in Baltimore where his project *Visibility Machines: Harun Farocki and Trevor Paglen* will open later this fall.



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