

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATIAS FALDBAKKEN

EUROPE IS BALDING

521 West 21st Street

February 18 – March 19, 2016

NEW YORK – The Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Matias Faldbakken. The artist will debut a video entitled *EUROPE IS BALDING*, as well as a series of sculptures. The exhibition will be on view from February 18 through March 19, 2016, at 521 West 21st Street.

Matias Faldbakken's work conveys an intractable yet nuanced ambiguity that mines the tension between proposition and cancellation, aggression and retreat, and language and its abstraction into illegibility or absurdity. His aesthetic of reticence and refusal functions as a universal solvent of culturally established meanings and anchors his work in a rebuke of neat binary oppositions.

For his new video, *EUROPE IS BALDING*, Faldbakken shows a backlit-silhouetted figure reciting a narrative account to the camera. The individual's shrouded face recalls those techniques employed in news reporting, meant to conceal and protect the identity of the interviewee. Pitched down precisely to the point where it is rendered unintelligible, the witness' speech slips from the viewer's comprehension; his or her story collapses into semantic obscurity. Intercut with this 'interview' are images and footage, understood as supplementary evidence of the interviewee/storyteller's account. Yet, as the verbal storyline is abstracted, the image flow is unmoored from sense and structure; a bewildering non sequitur of incongruous imagery, ranging from the historical to the absurd, hovers between narrative progression and pure retinal feed. Though it borrows its building blocks from narration, the video ultimately fails to resolve into a singular meaning — the narrative drifts into the realm of *the scroll*.

The exhibition will include additional new sculptures from a series of "untileable" objects (created with disjointed bathroom tiles), including a dashboard, a wheelbarrow tray, and a pallet. Bearing evidence of the artist's (unskilled) handwork, these mass-produced items become open-ended signifiers: part ubiquitous manufactured commodity, part 'priceless' art object and part wreck.

Matias Faldbakken was born in Denmark and lives and works as an artist and writer in Oslo, Norway. Faldbakken studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Bergen and the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main. In 2005 he represented Norway in the Nordic Pavilion at the Venice Biennial. Recent one-person exhibitions include Le Consortium, Dijon; WIELS, Brussels; The Power Station, Dallas; Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen; Kunsthalle St. Gallen, St. Gallen; IKON Gallery, Birmingham; The National Museum of Art, Design and Architecture, Oslo. In 2012 Faldbakken participated in Documenta 13 in Kassel and in 2016 he will participate in the 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea. His work is included

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in the following public collections: the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The National Museum of Art, Oslo; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Jumex Collection, Mexico City; The Ellipse Foundation, Lisbon; and The Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo, among others. Faldbakken is also known in Norway and abroad for his novels *The Cocka*, *Hola Company*, *Macht und Rebel*, *Unfun*, and others.