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press release

KENDELL GEERS

A GUEST + A HOST = A GHOST

27 November 2009 – 16 January 2010
Private View Thursday 26 November 2009, 6 – 8pm

Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present new works by South African-born, Belgium-based artist, Kendell Geers.

Kendell Geers is known for work that confronts the viewer head on. It often startles the eye and requires a degree of interrogation from the spectator. In this new body of work, Geers instigates a dialogue with 'readymade' icon and Dadaist great, Marcel Duchamp, and presents a series of glass and mirrored sculptures. Neither homage nor naïve appropriation, this new body of work demands that the viewer reassess pre-conceived notions of the 'authentic' – both in the art world and in wider political spheres.

The exhibition title 'A Guest + A Host = A Ghost' quotes an obscure work by Duchamp, which provides the foundation for this challenging new body of work. Originally conceived of by Duchamp in 1953, 'A Guest...' consisted of foil candy wrappers that were handed out by the artist at an opening in Paris in the same year. The above witticism was printed on the shiny, crinkled surface of the wrappers.

In the front gallery Geers presents a large-scale mirror installation based on four letter words. Here, the roles of the subjects (Guest, Host and Ghost) denoted in the epigram are allowed to play out. Covering the full length of the Gallery walls, the mirrored reliefs are cut out to form words such as 'give', 'love', 'fuck' and 'host' in the negative space. When standing in front of the reflective surface with one's own image fragmented, the roles of the visitor/viewer as 'Guest' and the artist as 'Host' are recognised and at the same time, subverted and distorted.

In contrast to the mirror installation is a series of sculptures consisting of large sheets of bullet-proof glass that have been shot at with a rifle. Each one takes its size and shape from a specific key Duchampian glass panelled work. The central sculpture echoes the form of 'The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even', a seminal work by Duchamp that he himself shot at with a toy cannon. In a contemporary renewal of this aesthetic, the beautiful delicacy of the shattered panes provides a rich juxtaposition with the violent act that created them. At the same time, the desecrated panels stand in a marked contrast to the precision and care afforded to the treatment of the mirrored surface in the front space. In each instance, the physical properties of the materials have been pushed to their very limit, creating works that resonate with a powerful sense of the corporeal.

Kendell Geers (b. May 1968) lives and works in Brussels. His major touring exhibition '*Irrespektiv*' is currently on display at Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (MART) in Turin after having travelled to Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, France (2008) Da2 Salamanca, Spain (2008); (S.M.A.K.) Gent, Belgium (2007); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Newcastle, UK (2007). Recent group shows include *Wall Rockets: Contemporary Artists and Ed Ruscha*, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, USA (2008); *African Pavilion*, 52nd Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2007) and *Global Cities*, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London (2007).

Forthcoming exhibition: **Cornelius Quabeck**, 29 January – 6 March 2010
Stephen Friedman Gallery will be participating in Art Basel Miami Beach, 3 – 6 December 2009, Stand F18
Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am-6pm and Saturday, 11am-5pm
For further details please contact Alice Walters on +44 (0)20 7494 1434