

LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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Ragnar Kjartansson

June 25 – August 13, 2010

Opening reception: Thursday, June 24, 6-8 pm



Luhring Augustine is pleased to present its first solo exhibition of work by Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson. Kjartansson (b. 1976, Reykjavík) is fascinated by the tragicomic spectacle of human experience in which sorrow coexists with happiness, horror with beauty, and drama with humor. Though he is primarily known for performance, Kjartansson also pursues more traditional media such as painting, drawing, and video. His work taps into nostalgic imagery from bygone eras of theater, television, music, and art, allowing him to blur the border between reality and fiction.

In 2009, Kjartansson became the youngest artist to represent Iceland at the Venice Biennale and it was there that he created *The End (Venice)*. Merging his continued interest in durational performance with the classical practice of portraiture, he set out to create a painting on each day of the Biennale. The exhibition at Luhring Augustine will display all 144 paintings created during the Biennale, and the installation will follow an approximate chronological order corresponding to the six months of artistic production. Vitrines in the exhibition space will include archival notes and correspondence related to the project. Kjartansson viewed this long durational performance as an opportunity to surrender to his own romantic ideals and to elaborate on the performative, almost theatrical aspect of painting.

The second gallery will debut a new video work by Kjartansson that was filmed outside Austin, Texas in 2010. Titled *The Man*, this piece features legendary blues pianist Pinetop Perkins, the oldest living original Delta Bluesman. Kjartansson's exploration of repetition and endurance, apparent in his own performances, is here transferred to this revered musician who has been staging and performing this music for over seven decades.

Kjartansson lives and works in Iceland. His work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions, most recently at the Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Canada, The Sundance Film Festival New Frontier, Park City, Utah, and Hafnarborg, The Hafnarfjordur Centre of Culture and Fine Art, Hafnarfjörður, Iceland. The artist has also participated in the 2nd Turin Triennial, Turin, Italy, Manifesta 8, Rovereto, Italy, and *Repeat Performances: Roni Horn and Ragnar Kjartansson*, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, among others. His work is included in numerous museum collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Dallas Museum of Art, Texas, North Miami Museum of Contemporary Art, Florida, and The National Gallery of Canada, Ontario. Ragnar's work was first featured at Luhring Augustine in the 2008 group exhibition *It's Not Your Fault: Art from Iceland*.

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