

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Labor Class presentation
to be held at Winkleman Gallery
621 West 27th Street

March 12, 2010 at 4pm

The artist Bernard Klevickas will present Labor class on March 12th at Winkleman Gallery as part of the exhibition #class. From 2000 to 2005 Mr. Klevickas worked as a metal fabricator at an art foundry which constructed sculpture for Jeff Koons, Louise Bourgeois, Carroll Dunham, Rona Pondick, Anish Kapoor, Tom Otterness, Charles Ray, Eric Fischl, Kiki Smith, Frank Stella, Magdalena Abakanowicz, and others. Labor class will be an opportunity to hear and see what life is like from a worker's perspective of building the sculpture of established artists.

The recently opened exhibition Skin Fruit at the New Museum has sparked a controversy within the art world in which a trustee of the museum exhibits his own collection curated by an art-star who is widely collected by the trustee. A cynic may consider this as part of the art world as usual, but up to now it has not appeared to be quite so blatant or happened at a museum with the stated mission of "new art, new ideas". The exhibition #class can be considered an antidote to the hyped-up, overblown, out-of-reach and out-of-touch high-end art market kiss with the non-for-profit institutional art-world. Countless people are out of work yet it seems that a side of the art world continues to bloat and swell with influence and wealth. The unestablished artist struggles away in his or her studio after the day-job and watches as a select few students fresh out of art school get museum shows or larger than life art-stars get enormous support while it appears that the middle has fallen out. #class, an exhibition organized by Jennifer Dalton and William Powhida allows an honest dialogue to develop between various aspects of the art world, an artist's career and the real world. Labor class developed as a way to share the experience of what it is like at the bottom of the food chain in the art market: The laborers and craftspeople who physically make the art that eventually ends up displayed in the art fairs and galleries, museums and private collections around the world.

Bernard Klevickas recounts: "When I walked in the door on my first day I was given an angle-grinder with a heavy grinding stone attached to it. I ground down the edges to make a bevel for welding on the end-cap on 5-foot diameter pipes stacked and angled as part of Alexander Liberman's Adonai, a forty foot tall and over 60 foot long sculpture. This was a replacement for the original. Mr. Liberman passed-away and his sculpture had deteriorated over time while on display at Storm King Art Center. I held the spinning grinder to the steel for nearly 8 hours a day for a week (there were breaks and lunch). I could've relaxed a little more, taken it a little easier, but I wanted to make a good impression."

Day to day artisans punch in on a time-clock to weld together aluminum castings of pool toys, gi-normous bronze spiders, cartoon figures, hand-modeled tractor parts, bronze pieces of bodies, etc. A division of workers spend untold hours grinding coarse stainless steel into mirrored surfaces to resemble mercury-like liquid shapes. The desire of the wealthy to acquire art from famous artists propels an industry to engineer and make an odd assortment shapes and caricatures. Store bought ladders and trashcans are gently altered to interact with cut, fitted and welded inflatable animals of metal for "one of the world's most famous artists." To most it is no secret that many famous artists do not have a hand in the work they make. The idea is what matters after-all, and the projects these artist's pursue and the galleries that fund them do maintain an industry for many crafts-people.

"I worked on projects for Frank Stella in which the cast aluminum had sharp edges and continually ripped-up my jeans. Another Stella piece had a low-hanging steel element that I bumped my head on repeatedly as I maneuvered around to weld. Stella once commented that he wanted it to be low so that people (meaning gallery-goers) would have a difficult time getting around it." says Mr. Klevickas

Hi-res images available (for press only) upon request

For further information contact Bernard Klevickas directly at 718 306-2945 or bklevickas@mac.com

#class is an Art Forum critics pick: <http://artforum.com/archive/id=25015> (you may be required to register. It is free)