MATIAS FALDBAKKEN

*TELEVISION/MOONSHINE*

February 13th – March 13th, 2011

Reena Spaulings presents *TELEVISION/MOONSHINE* by Matias Faldbakken. For his second exhibition at the gallery, the Oslo-based artist and novelist has produced two new groups of sculptures made with cast concrete.

One of the many local moonshiners in Hamar, Norway, in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s was Thomas Myrmoen. Myrmoen lived with his grandmother and used her bathroom as the production site for moonshine. His product became so popular among the youth of Hamar that he eventually put labels on his jugs: "Myrmoen-Sprit.” This would soon lead the police to his front door and his business was shut down.

In a show that could have been made by Rachel Whiteread's lazy teenage daughter, Faldbakken continues a series of container sculptures that has previously involved wardrobe lockers, VHS cassettes, liquor bottles, newspaper vending machines and empty Marshall cabinets. Here, the artist uses empty flat screen TV boxes and plastic jugs (of the sort that are commonly used for producing and distributing moonshine alcohol in Norway). In homage to these two (old school) formats, television and moonshine, ideas of them are simultaneously killed and preserved, in a Pompeii-esque way, with durability and weight.

Reducing sculptural gesture to the simple act of pouring cement into these readymade forms, Faldbakken also equates sculptural content with the dimensions and shapes of the containers he has chosen. Sometimes neglecting to remove a box or jug from the concrete filling that renders this container useless, he collapses the distinction between sculpture and mold (as well as between process and end product). Here, aesthetic products are the side effects of an artistic strategy that engages readily available possibilities of disengagement.

TV boxes and moonshine jugs contain a potential of escape and good times accompanied by the threat of loss of control, resignation or a descent into the irrational. Here, where the brute banality of concrete meets the packaging’s promise of content, or of subjective transformation or obliteration, sculptural qualities result from the most limited gesture of filling common voids. When the attitude is resignation and resignation becomes form, the gallery is filled like a Samsung box.

Recent exhibitions by Matias Faldbakken include *Shocked Into Abstraction* at the National Museum of Art, Oslo, *That Death of Which One Does Not Die* at the Kunsthalle Friedericianum, Kassel, and *THE HHILLS* at STANDARD (OSLO), Oslo.

Gallery Hours: Thursday through Sunday, noon to 6pm.

More info: www.reenaspaulings.com