



# Kunstraum

## Alex Cecchetti

### *The printing house of hell*

27 June – 15 August 2015

*Dear William,*

*The work at the printing house never stops.*

*When we have ink we find no paper, when we have paper we find no words, when we have words they have no meanings, when we find meanings they make no sense.*

*All the L's turn out to be noses, all the M's rise up as mountains, Q's are cherries and olives and B's are gorgeous and generous breasts.*

*We are good for nothing some say, we really are indeed. We cherish it and feed it, pet it and put it to sleep.*

*Vigil we keep on the working at the printworks of hell, for the mouth of the feral nothing shall not shut all over the earth.*

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Alex Cecchetti is a storyteller whose work manifests itself as performance, writing and the creation of objects. Cecchetti creates situations to have the quality of surprising himself, experiencing them for the first time at the moment of performance. His practice often returns to the duality of representation and concealment; how objects can be rendered in speech, how speech itself is made visible, whether that which is visible can be seen by that which is not.

Cecchetti's biography lists his date of death as 2014 – his subsequent projects begin with the premise that he is practicing beyond the grave. *The printing house of hell's* title – inspired by William Blake's description of a printworks in the underworld – encapsulates an idea of the world printing its own copy, the human drive to replicate through recursion. The printing house of hell opens with the artist leading a tour of heaven and hell – narrated through the private corridors and studios of the building where Kunstraum is located.

At the centre of the exhibition is a sculpture derived from Saint Marie l'egyptienne, a 14th Century statue from Eglise Collégiale Notre-Dame d'Ecouis, France – notable for the saint's hair which covers almost her entire body. Made in collaboration with the technical departments of the Louvre, Cecchetti's sculpture traces the physical process of making the cast and reveals the unseen abstracted form which lies within hollow statues.

Within the exhibition are drawings and works on paper including: Cecchetti's *Dancing with a teapot* drawings, which inscribe a scenario in which the artist and his subject seem to dance for one-another; and *'Mémoires'*, a portfolio of erotic drawings which can be shown to each visitor only once, and only for a moment; finally for *Song of Solitude* the audience is invited to use the series of abstracted line drawings as a musical score for improvisation using different artificial birdcallers.

The works in The printing house of hell follow a number of threads in Cecchetti's practice – copies, revisions, the threads of stories, choreographies of the artist and his audience. The final work in the exhibition gathers together these ideas in a sculptural installation to be experienced by touch. A well worn balustrade handrail taken from a dilapidated house in the south of France rises and twists in the space. As the handrail rises, falls and twists, the viewer must enter into choreography of the exhibition, following Cecchetti's call to action.

### **Biography:**

Alex Cecchetti (b. 1977, Italy; d. 2014) lives and works in Paris. Cecchetti has performed and exhibited in numerous international institutions and foundations including: Centre Pompidou, Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Kunsthall Aarhus, Denmark; FRAC Lorraine, Metz (all 2014); Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris; South London Gallery, London (both 2013); MAXXI National Museum Rome; CAC Vilnius, Lithuania; Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, USA (all 2012); Jeu de Paume, Paris (2011), Le Magasin, Grenoble (2010), Museion, Bolzano, Italy; Artists Space, New York; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris (all 2009).

### **List of works:**

*Dancing with a teapot*, 2015  
oil on paper

*Copy of Marie-Madeleine otherwise said Marie l'Egyptienne*, 1311–2015  
silicone and plaster

*Chapel of Female Masturbation, or teaching to a young boy*, 2015  
blackberries on wall

*Song of Solitude*, 2012  
china ink on paper and birdcallers  
"Please ask for a birdcaller and use the drawings as music score to create the soundtrack of the exhibition"

*Arabesque*, 2015  
walnut wood  
"Please touch the handrail from the beginning till the end with your eyes closed"

*Mémoires*, 2014  
china ink on paper,  
"Please ask to see the drawings – careful, you can see them only once"