



MICHAEL E. SMITH EXHIBITION 2010

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Michael E. Smith
Exhibition view KOW, Berlin, 2010

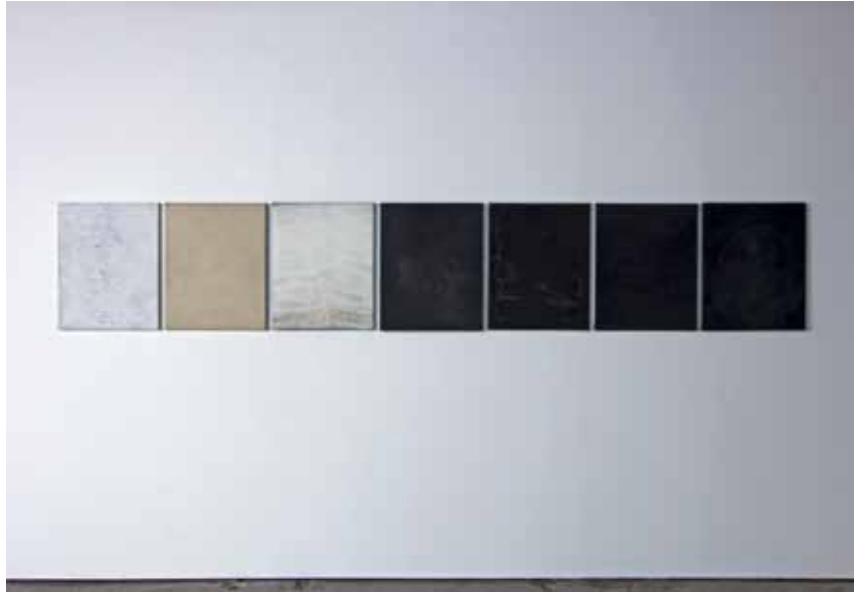


Michael E. Smith

Untitled, 2009
Tape, hats, foam
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2009
Sweatpants and polyester resin
Dimensions variable

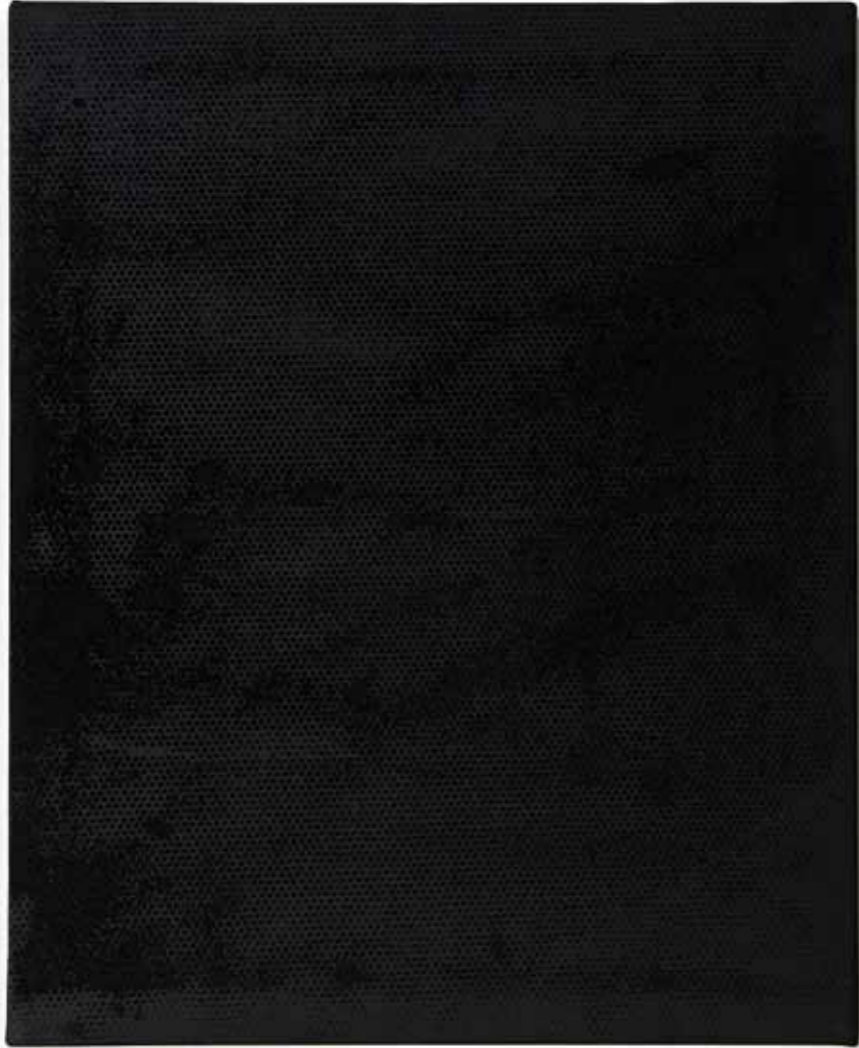
Untitled, 2010
T-shirt, magnet, garden hose
Dimensions variable



Michael E. Smith
Exhibition view KOW, Berlin, 2010



Michael E. Smith
Untitled, 2010
Mixed media on canvas
51 × 40.5 cm each



Michael E. Smith

Untitled, 2010
Mixed media on canvas
51 × 40.5 cm

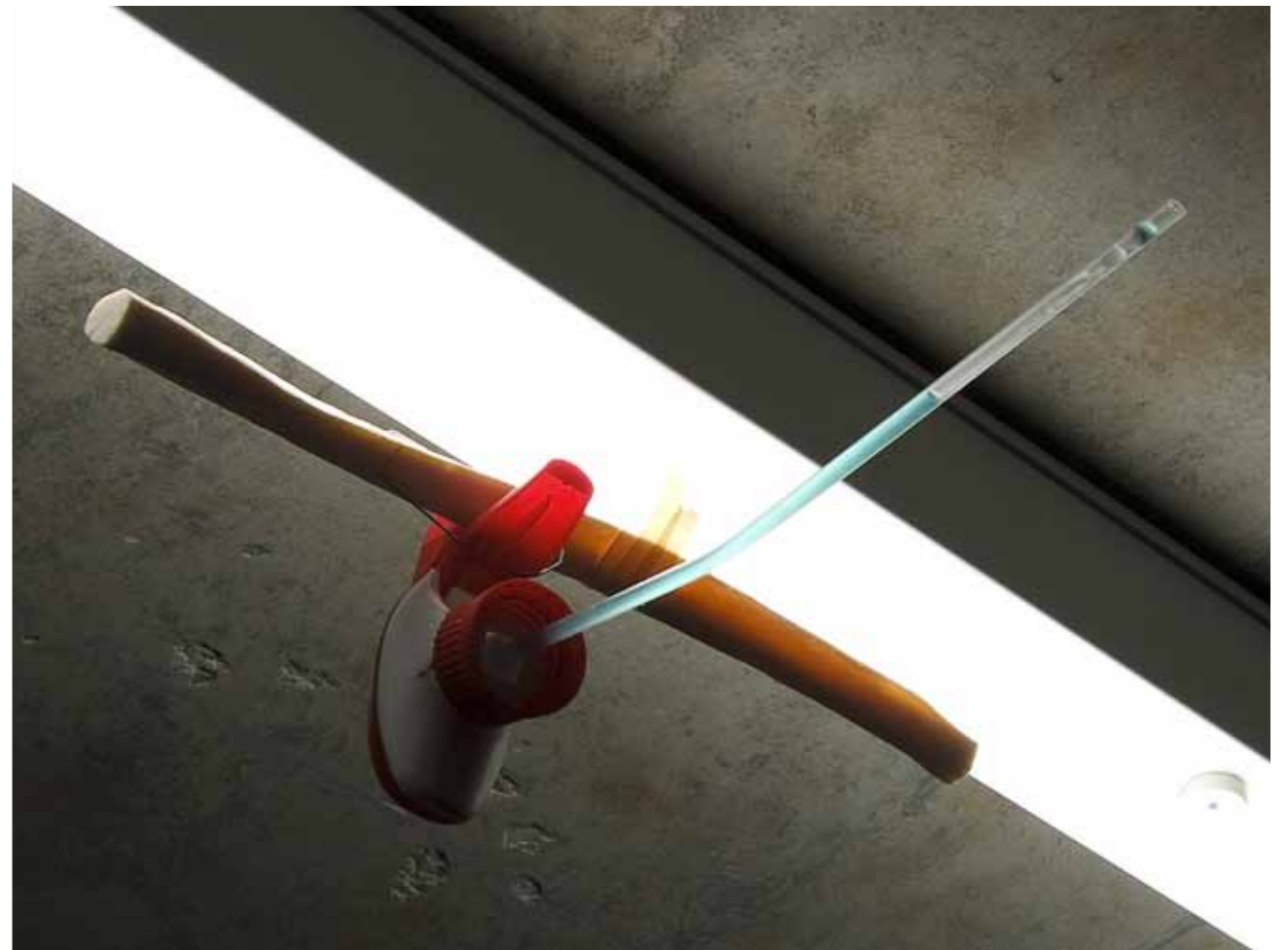


Michael E. Smith

Untitled, 2010
Mixed media on canvas
51 × 40.5 cm



Michael E. Smith
Exhibition view KOW, Berlin, 2010



Michael E. Smith
Untitled, 2010
Plastic bone, metal hook, windex spray
nossle, tape, fluorescent light
15 x 150 x 30 cm



Michael E. Smith

Untitled, 2010
Melted telephone wire,
altered fluorescent light bulb
8.5 × 18 × 22.5 cm



Michael E. Smith

Larry Bird's Scalp, 2010
Buff goose pelt, plastic
37.5 × 22 × 5 cm



Michael E. Smith
Exhibition view KOW, Berlin, 2010



Michael E. Smith
Untitled, 2010
Sweatshirt, polyester resin
14 × 35 × 24 cm

The baby teeth appear just to fall right out. The same happens with the second teeth. Parents who do not know any better raise their kids on "Mountain Dew", a popular soda drink with such high levels of caffeine and sugar that it destroys the enamel. New Orleans and the coasts of the Southern States are by no means the only disaster zones of the USA; there are also the bodies and lives of more and more people. Ancient Greek ethics valued the "Care of the Self" as fundamental to the responsible existence of any individual or society. A concept evoked by Michel Foucault. Western societies, however, seem to struggle with this kind of care and are faced with the resulting damage.

The oeuvre of Michael E. Smith portrays America's distressed soul at the beginning of the 21st century. He displays it as a layout of ruined bodies, symbols of the traumatic existence in a paralyzed system violently negating and repressing its own vulnerability. Smith uses clothes, freezers, metal cans – all sorts of objects and materials that protect or preserve, that are close to the body or seem physical themselves, like industrial foam, and forces them into a spatial and formally rigid order. Paint, resin and oil agglutinate or harden the remains of a modest life. Symbolic references to Afro-American, working class and hip-hop cultures hint at the struggles many endure in trying to survive under repressive conditions.

Smith's exhibitions are silenced. Through modest gestures or interventions he forces spaces into emotional and symbolical tension. He improvises his scarce installations out of objects, both found and made, frequently right at the spot. These minimalist settings exist next to his sculptures, paintings, works on paper, and videos. The small canvasses have scarred or crusted surfaces, or they are ashy black monochromes. In his drawings, the ink sits on the paper like graffiti or sinks into it, sometimes like a tattoo, sometimes like mud. The videos display minimalist loops: dog paws twitching in sleep, the sweaty hair of Miles David, legs with trousers whipped by storm.

Michael E. Smith (b. 1977) studied at Yale University. He now lives and works in Detroit where he teaches at the College for Creative Studies (CCS) since 2008. The exhibition with KOW was his first solo show in a gallery.

Michael E. Smith

Solo exhibition at KOW

12.06.–25.07.2010

Text, photos, design: Alexander Koch

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