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R Eric McMaster THE OBSTRUCTION OF ACTION

JANUARY 4 - FEBRUARY 15, 2012

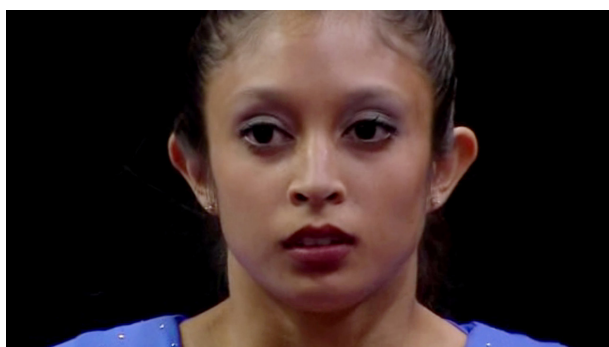


1708 Gallery is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition, **R Eric McMaster: *The Obstruction of Action***, on view January 4 through February 15, 2013. Please join us for the opening reception on Friday, January 4. There will be a gallery talk with the artist on Thursday, January 31 at 6:30 pm.

Through sculptural, photographic and video works, R Eric McMaster presents documentation and artifacts of sports events in which athletes have performed under unusual conditions. By intensifying the viewer's awareness of the conventions and agreements to which athletes are bound through their participation in an organized competition, ***The Obstruction of Action*** explores issues of complicity, vulnerability and social hierarchy.



The exhibit is anchored by three works: a shrunken hockey rink; an HD video projection documenting a match played in the rink (both titled *The Obstruction of Action by the Presence of Form*); and a video of compiled footage of athletes preparing to perform titled *The Obstruction of Action by the Presence of Order*.



The Obstruction of Action by the Presence of Form presents a 12x18' hockey rink--small but otherwise complete and capable of sustaining a match. Viewers are invited to enter the rink so that they might more intimately encounter the residue of scuffs and abrasions left by the players. The accompanying video, projected on the gallery wall, documents a match played in the rink. Featuring two full teams and a referee in a space that is less

than one-tenth the size of a regulation rink, these individuals hardly have space to turn around, much less skate. The players no longer glide, but clumsily inch back and forth on their skates. Their actions contracted, one experiences this particular match as a site of sanctioned, mundane combat. Rather than the glory, one feels the grind.

Composed entirely of silent footage of the faces of athletes, *The Obstruction of Action through the Presence of Order* extends McMaster's gesture of a hacked athletics. The looping video highlights the manner by which professional athletes compose themselves as they wait for "the signal" to begin performing. Decontextualizing the performers from their performance as well as from the chat-filler of commentators, the work suspends its subjects in an unhurried and therefore brutal and telling stretch of sideways glances, awkward half-smiles, and anxious gulps. We get nervous on the athlete's behalf, the potential for fallibility rendering each highly-cultivated performer almost unbearably human.

R Eric McMaster (b. 1979, Clarion, PA) received a BFA in Sculpture from The Pennsylvania State University and an MFA in Sculpture from Arizona State University. Solo exhibits include *Unquestionable Acceptance* at Richard Levy Gallery in Albuquerque, NM and *Uniform* at Eye Lounge Contemporary Art Space in Phoenix. Group exhibitions include *The Vault* at SPACES Gallery in Cleveland, OH, *Monumental Drift* at Highpoint Gallery in Richmond, VA, and *Tallahassee International* at the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts in Tallahassee, FL. He is the recipient of a 2011-12 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Professional Fellowship and the Ted Decker Catalyst Fund Artist Award. He lives in Richmond, VA where he is Assistant Professor and Lab Technician in VCU's Department of Sculpture + Extended Media. For more information, please visit www.rericmcmaster.com.

1708 Gallery's current exhibition season is generously supported in part by Jay Barrows and Cindy Neuschwander, Page and Sandy Bond, Richard Douglas and Suzanna Fields, Josh and Sarah Eckhardt, John Freeman, Kathryn Henry-Choisser, Susan and John Jamieson, Jillian Krupski, Celia Rafalko and Rick Sample, Bill and Pam Royall, the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

1708 Gallery is a non-profit arts organization committed to presenting exceptional new art. 1708 Gallery is committed to providing opportunities for artistic innovation for emerging and established artists and to expanding the understanding and appreciation of new art for the public.

IMAGE CREDITS: R Eric McMaster, *The Obstruction of Action by the Presence of Form*, photograph, 2012; R Eric McMaster, *The Obstruction of Action by the Presence of Form*, video still, 2012; R Eric McMaster, *The Obstruction of Action through the Presence of Order*, video still, 2012.

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