

Eirik Sæther

*INNESTEMME*

Jenny's @ 47 Canal, NYC

June 25 - July 31, 2015

For his first solo exhibition in the United States, organized by the Los Angeles gallery Jenny's, Oslo-based artist Eirik Sæther presents a new body of sculptural and video work. The show's title, *INNESTEMME*, translates from Norwegian to "inside voice" - most accurately referring to the command given to noisy school children, but also to suggest an inner voice that is often suppressed. Sæther's work stems from a place that is private and personal, utilizing concealment and ornament as a mode of expression, much like a shell.

In a video surreptitiously captured on Sæther's computer in his Oslo studio, a team of security guards inspect a wooden crate that has been modified as a hiding place by the artist, in order to stay in the building after the evening curfew. Decorative objects and a vase were adhered to the top of the crate to certify that his camouflage would remain foolproof, seemingly to appear as if no one was hiding inside. Though his guise was eventually discovered, the behavior of hiding or withdrawing oneself into an embellished container is a crucial component of the works in the exhibition.

Sæther's epoxy wall lamps read *BAKE FROM SCRATCH*, reliefs cast from an assortment of baking supplies and wooden letters from hobby shops, store-bought symbols of one's handcrafted authentic self. The letters are rearranged to the point of confusion, obscuring the message and therefore the content of a unique, affected persona. Codes of language and clothing are often the first point of contact with an outward expression of individuality, and Sæther manipulates both to distort interpretation.

The *Ståplass* works (whose title translates to "standing room") are poised with potential, combining hand stitched skirts with repurposed fabrics and objects - along with polyurethane casts of the artist's feet, as self-conscious stand-ins both absent and present. Suggestive of mannequin displays and wearable garments, the skirts are a bodiless shell waiting to be activated by a human form. When identities become fluid and interchangeable through online personas, packaged DIY "express yourself" kits, and codes of gender that challenge the normative status quo, slipping into one's chosen identity leaves the wearer to reconcile with the response, and generates a continual oscillation between showing off and retreating.

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Eirik Sæther (b. 1983) lives and works in Oslo, and has exhibited at various galleries and institutions across Europe, including VI, VII, Oslo, and Kunstverein München, Munich; along with recent curatorial projects at Kunsthall Stavanger, and Diorama, Norway. He was a member of the Norwegian art collective Institut for Degenerert Kunst (2007 - 2015).