

# Murray Guy

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## Vertically Integrated Manufacturing

9 January – 20 February



Murray Guy is very pleased to present the exhibition “Vertically Integrated Manufacturing,” including works by Francis Alÿs, Carl Andre, Fia Backström, Bernd & Hilla Becher, DAS INSTITUT, Dexter Sinister, Douglas Huebler, Allan McCollum, and Stephen Prina, as well as a CD by Seth Price. Please join us for an opening reception on Saturday, January 9 from 6 to 8 pm.

Taking as its starting point Jacques Rancière’s observation that “artistic practice is not the outside of work, but rather its displaced form of visibility,” the works in this show put their own conditions of production on display, responding to and perhaps even anticipating changing processes of labor.

If art has the capacity to bridge sensory experience and abstract thought, it might be uniquely suited to reflect on an economy that increasingly blurs differences between physical goods and immaterial services, and confuses distinctions between production and consumption. In this economy, “Treat manufacturing as a service” is the new managerial imperative, and companies like Nike configure themselves not as producers of goods such as shoes or clothing, but rather as manufacturers of a brand that is supported by the circulation of products and other activities.

“Vertically Integrated Manufacturing” is not necessarily meant to imply a mode of top-down physical integration, such as Carnegie Steel or American Apparel, but rather to suggest a starting point for understanding each artist as negotiating a series of relationships between certain materials or inputs and the ordering, transformation and distribution thereof.

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Since the early 1960s, the beginning of a critical decline of blue-collar manufacturing work in the West, **Carl Andre** has constructed sculptures using industrial units such as copper plates, fire bricks, concrete blocks and raw timber. He selects, arranges, and displays these components without joining them together—challenging us to radically reconsider the material transformation associated with artistic labor, and the physical experience of a sculpture.

**Bernd and Hilla Becher** started photographing industrial structures in the 1950s, using a detached structuralist grammar that echoed the mechanized processes that they were documenting. Their taxonomic procedure not only reflects the rapidly evolving role of these industrial systems (as their photographs threaten to become a series of abstract forms), but also represents a new kind of peripatetic labor, analogous perhaps to the archeologist, consultant, anthropologist or tourist.

**Douglas Huebler** created a series of artworks that perhaps can best be understood as cybernetic experiments, which hold their potential “information” or “content” in suspension. Writing in 1969 that “The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more,” he generated sets of conditions for artworks while simultaneously withdrawing from them, setting up circuits of communication which call on the viewer to actively join in their production.

**Stephen Prina** is slowly re-producing the 556 works included in the 1967 catalogue raisonné of Eduard Manet’s paintings. His ongoing project, *Exquisite Corpse: The Complete Paintings of Manet* (1988-present) sets up a relation not between specific images but rather between Prina’s labor and Manet’s. His works rely almost parasitically on Manet’s, and beg the question: what does it mean to arrange one’s own artistic project as a systematic double of another’s?

In *Recycle (Hanging Proposal for a sculpture by Kelley Walker)* (2007), **Fia Backström** constructs a display for a sculpture of a gold recycling sign by Kelley Walker. Backström slyly fashions a brand; foregrounding her affective labor, she lets the sign slip into a cheery British Petroleum logo and become a prop in a picnic, asking a series of objects to support a feeling of happiness or an idea of productive (*let’s all recycle!*) consumption.

**Allan McCollum’s** *Shapes from Maine* derives from his method for constructing over 30 billion unique shapes, at least one for each person on the planet. Here McCollum has worked over the internet with Holly and Larry Little, founders of Aunt Holly’s Copper Cookie Cutters, a home business in Trescott, Maine. The unique cookie cutters that result from this collaboration stage a new kind of distributed individuality: they are certainly not the products of Fordist mass production, but neither are they traditional home handicrafts.

*Black Whisky* is a speculative collaboration between **Dexter Sinister** and Stähmühle, an artisanal schnapps producer in the Black Forest of Germany. Sinister approaches whisky production self-reflexively and transparently, returning to a codified form of production—one which results in a potable product with a measurable standard of quality—to examine possibilities of strict vertical integration (conception, manufacturing, advertising and distribution) amidst changing systems of circulation and exchange.

**DAS INSTITUT** is an “Import-Export” agency founded in 2007 by Kerstin Brätsch and Adele Röder. Suspending any concrete trade of goods (what is being imported and what is exported?), they work in a contingent space between painting and advertising, producing a series of self-generated activities, catalogs, patterns, performances and annual reports which scrutinize possible connections between material transformations and value.

**Francis Alÿs’** collage *Repertoire* (2005) presents a vocabulary of possible actions to relate to the city, referencing Richard Serra’s *Verb List Compilation* (1968), which offers an inventory of potential ways of relating to materials. Alÿs’ work derives from five years of walking around London; his concern is the paradox of producing something out of nothing—a series of transient exchanges in the mode of the flâneur—enacting a stance between activity and passivity.

Also available for sale during the show will be *8-4, 9-5, 10-6, 11-7*, a CD by **Seth Price** that consists of an 8-hour dance track. A potential background music for the workday, Price’s mix reflects both the easy availability of digital mixing software and music, and the role of the “DJ” as a new, value-added distributor (or curator) of taste.