

Galerie Daniel Templon

Brussels

Press Release
January 15, 2014

IVÁN NAVARRO

Nacht und Nebel

January 16 – February 22, 2014
Opening: Thursday, January 16 from 5.30 to 8.30 pm



Ex (Bricks), 2012, neon, mirror, one way mirror, bricks, 72 x 102 x 31 - in.

Chilean artist Iván Navarro is exhibiting his work in Brussels for the first time, with *Nacht und Nebel*, an installation of **trompe-l'œil** light sculptures that explore memories of the Second World War.

Presented for the first time at La Fondazione Volume! in Rome in 2012, and curated by Antonio Arevalo, the installation recalls the atmosphere of Italy under Nazi occupation and the bombing campaigns of 1943-1944. It comprises six geometric light wells — circle, triangle and rectangle — constructed of brick and cement. Each sculpture spells out a word in neon, with mirrors used to project the word infinitely: ODIO, OCCHIO, EX, BECCO, ECCIDIO, etc. Plunged into darkness, the gallery thus seems to open onto **endless light-filled passages**, metaphors for both escape and disappearance.

Navarro seeks to trigger a different attitude to history, exploring the **ambiguities of memory**. Every illuminated word possesses both real substance and **illusory density**. Language becomes an illuminated manifestation of conscience, referencing **double meanings** and the painful chasms that separate appearance from truth.

For the Project Room, Ivan Navarro created two new pieces that play on the theme of ambivalence, whether formal or linguistic. Two purified wells invite the visitors to look at the words *Above all* and *All of the Above*, phrases normally self-contained in their meaning, but with new significance in the context of these works. Set in relation with an older piece, *Defect* — an ambiguous word because of its double meaning as a noun or verb — these works form a set that manages to subtly transform structure into an act of communication.

Born in Chile in 1972 and now a resident of New York, Iván Navarro uses light as his raw material. Turning everyday objects into electric sculptures and transforming the exhibition space by means of visual interplays, his work appropriates the language of minimalism in order to develop understated **political and social criticism**. Having grown up under the Pinochet dictatorship, Iván Navarro is haunted by questions of power, control and **imprisonment, both physical and psychological**. The title of this latest exhibition refers to Adolph Hitler's 1941 decree that ordered the Third Reich's opponents to be spirited away in "**the night and the fog**" (nacht und nebel) — a death sentence. The decree's initials, NN, are the same as those used in Latin American for the disappeared, those **No Names** Iván Navarro's works so often invoke.

Iván Navarro represented Chile at the 53th Venice Biennale in 2009. His work has been shown worldwide, including at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, New York (2006), Museo del Barrio, New York (2007), MOCA, Miami (2007), Fundación Caja de Burgos (2010), La Maison Rouge and Frost Art Museum in Miami in 2012. He took part in the *Light Show* exhibition at the Hayward Gallery (London) in 2013. His work features in a great many international collections, such as the Saatchi Collection (London), Martin Z. Margulies Collection (Miami), Hirshorn Museum (Washington, D.C.), Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Richmond), Fonds National d'Art Contemporain and Fondation Louis Vuitton pour la création (Paris). He will be installing a monumental *in situ* project in New York's Madison Square Park on 20 February 2014, *This Land Is Your Land*. The installation will feature the giant water towers that are such an integral part of the New York cityscape, reflecting neon messages to create the illusion of infinite space.

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