

PRESS RELEASE

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ANDREA MASTROVITO

LES ETRANGERS

24, RUE DU VIEUX-BILLARD

Art Bärtschi & Cie is happy to inaugurate its new exhibition space at 24, rue du Vieux-Billard with a solo show of young italian artist **Andrea Mastrovito**.

Andrea Mastrovito feels like a stranger since he moved to the United States in 2008 after winning a state competition. Divided between his studio in Bergamo – his place of birth – and Brooklyn where he lives and works six months per year, it is a black and white universe that he presents today.

As he explains, it is above all Camus's famous novel *The Outsider*, read for the first time when he was fifteen years old that inspired him. The absurdity of human existence, key concept of the novel that he had already explored in his last exhibition *The Modern Prometheus* in 2012, is central to this new project. In the latter, he questions the banality of life through everyday objects, tables, newspapers, erasers which tell the life of the people that use them.

On the wall, he invites us to reflect on dominator-dominated relationships and on these superior forces – transcendental or not – who play with the individual and his/her fate. On a shelf, a series of emblematic works, Faust, Hamlet, Ulysses are disguised as *the Outsider's* book covers. On the floor, an Oriental carpet on which the spectator walks without even noticing...

In the series *the Ice Skaters*, the artist focuses on the relation between the Middle East and the West and particularly of the appropriation of the former by the latter. Carpets reappear, drawn this time by very westernized ice skaters who have pencils for blades. Just like artists, the ice skaters redraw the "world's most expensive carpet", a Persian carpet of the beginning of the 17th century sold for millions of dollars at an auction sale, but also a "war rug", an afghan carpet incorporating the apparatus of war into its design.

To create his works, Mastrovito hides no secret: he draws, cuts, paints and sticks each character. Although used to creating colourful works, two-dimensional black and white drawings and collages, furniture and everyday objects will inhabit and animate the new space of exhibition, raising important questions about human beings, their relation to life and freedom.