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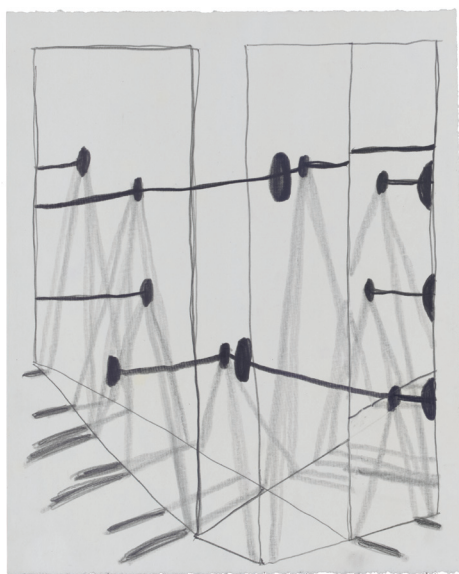
AL TAYLOR

Rim Jobs and Sideeffects

September 14 – October 23, 2010

Opening reception: Tuesday, September 14, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview: September 14, 5 PM



Sideeffect: Battleship Complex, ca. 1996. Pencil and graphite on paper. 18 3/16 x 14 11/16 inches (46.2 x 37.3 cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to exhibit a selection of drawings and three-dimensional objects by Al Taylor. On view at the gallery's 519 West 19th Street space, the exhibition will present a comprehensive exploration of two series: **Rim Jobs**, from 1995, and **Sideeffects** (*sic.*), which includes works that span from 1995 to 1997.

While he began his studio practice as a painter, in 1985 Taylor devised a uniquely innovative approach to process and materials that encompassed two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional objects. Taylor ultimately sought to expand the possibilities of vision by creating new ways of experiencing and imagining space, and his work provides the viewer with an insight into the artist's thinking and his investigations of perception across several dimensions.

Taylor saw no distinction between his three-dimensional works and his drawings, even going so far as to dismiss the term "sculpture" altogether for his constructions, referring to them instead as "drawings in space" or as "drawing instruments." During an interview in 1992, when he was asked by Ulrich Loock about the relationship between drawing and three-dimensionality in his work, the artist responded, "It's one and the same...Working on paper or on pieces really is the same thing; it's all one activity that I am not interested in separating."¹

In the creative process of Taylor's *oeuvre*, some drawings precede the objects, while others follow. His three-dimensional pieces were usually fashioned out of unconventional materials, incorporating humble and sometimes humorous elements, which he shaped into delicate assemblages that offered a multitude of distinct viewpoints, providing him with possibilities to "see more." These objects would subsequently form the basis of further explorations on paper, which documented the new visual perspectives that were opened up in real space. Moreover, the resultant drawings could then, in turn, inspire the spatial development of the three-dimensional pieces. In notes from 1990, Taylor wrote, "This work isn't at all about sculptural concerns; it comes from a flatter set of traditions. What I am really after is finding a way to make a group of drawings that you can look around. Like a pool player, I want to have all the angles covered."²

In 2008, the gallery presented its first exhibition of the artist's work (at Zwirner & Wirth), which focused on early drawings and constructions from Taylor's studio practice. The current exhibition shifts attention to works that were created by the artist *in situ* for solo exhibitions in Denmark in 1995 and Switzerland in 1996. In each case, the three-dimensional pieces were assembled from materials acquired locally, and, although some of the works on paper were completed in the studio, the artist made many of the drawings on site as he explored the given space by working back and forth between two and three dimensions.

All of the three-dimensional works and many of the related drawings that are collectively titled **Rim Jobs**, were made in Odense, Denmark, for the artist's 1995 exhibition at Galleri Tommy Lund. Ten days prior to the opening, Taylor arrived in Odense with his ideas sketched out in notebooks and exploratory drawings, and, after collecting the materials he would need to construct the pieces, he set to work using the empty gallery space as his studio.

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While the artist's playful and provocative use of language is evidenced by his collective title for this body of work, a number of the works in the *Rim Jobs* series seem to reference the Duchampian Readymade as a starting point, in this case by employing the metal rims of bicycle wheels. In some instances, Taylor left the wheel rims intact, while in others he cut and torqued the rims before connecting them to manipulated strips of cold-rolled steel, which in turn take on the appearance of languid lines that imply the trajectory of a moving wheel. For the artist, the uniformly-spoked, circular wheels comprised a kind of readymade drawing, and by employing the steel lengths, or by using suspension wires, he created spatial contortions, projections, and extensions of their outlines in space. As such, Taylor's assemblages appear to be diagramming imagined turns and spins, thus exemplifying his interest in experimenting with fluidity and movement in three dimensions. One work from the series, titled *X-Ray Tube*, 1995, utilizes an inflated rubber inner-tube, which the artist has suspended from the ceiling with wires. By drawing the tube's internal contours on its surface with grease crayon, Taylor dissected unseen spatial dimensions that create an illusory transparency. The artist's ongoing interest in researching "x-ray vision" and his study of scientific and mathematical concepts is apparent in *X-Ray Tube* and its related works on paper.

Also featured in the exhibition is **Sideeffects**, an installation comprised of thirty-four components hung on a double-sided wall. When preparing for an exhibition, Taylor enjoyed having to take into account the specific challenges presented by the inherent scale and architecture of the spaces where his work would be shown. In this instance, a dividing wall between two rooms of the Galerie Erika & Otto Friedrich in Bern, Switzerland, provided the impetus for *Sideeffects*, which was created on location for the artist's exhibition there in 1996.

Rod-like forms (which incorporate plastic-coated metal garden stakes with flat-ended heads made of cast Bondo – an industrial resin substitute for molten lead – that had been mixed with paint and rubbed with graphite) erratically protrude from both sides of the wall, creating the illusion that they penetrate and push through to the other side. A cast Bondo pancake-shaped disc or "lock" completes each extended stick on the other side of the wall, giving an ambulatory viewer the impression that the rods are secured at the exact point where they appear to pierce through the architecture. When positioning the individual components of the installation, Taylor mapped out the boundaries of the wall almost as if he were drawing on a sheet of paper, thus creating a multi-dimensional composition of lyrical lines and organic daubs that transgress through space and matter. A selection of related drawings from 1995-97 shows the evolution of the *Sideeffects* series, while their coy, ambiguous titles often reveal the artist's sense of humor (*Sideeffect von Wein und Bier*; *Sideeffects of Persecution Complex*; *Sideeffects: Of Cow Pies*, among others).

It is through Al Taylor's exploration of visual possibility that the viewer is invited to discover new ways of seeing the world. His "experiments" combined seemingly incongruous materials and concepts in order to find new relationships between subject matter, space, and meaning. As the artist aptly noted, "Instead of forcing myself onto some anonymous objects, I try to find a method that will allow them to form their own logic beyond me."³

A fully-illustrated catalogue featuring essays by art historian Ulrich Loock and mathematician Philip Ording will be published on the occasion of the exhibition by Steidl/David Zwirner.

Al Taylor (1948-1999) was born in Springfield, Missouri and studied at the Kansas City Art Institute. He moved to New York in 1970, where he would continue to live and work until his death in 1999. His first solo exhibition took place in 1986 at the Alfred Kren Gallery in New York. His work would go on to be shown in numerous exhibitions in America and Europe, including solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Bern (1992) and the Kunstmuseum Luzern (1999), both in Switzerland. A retrospective of Taylor's drawings was organized posthumously by the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich in 2006. His work is found in a number of prominent public collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Glenstone, Potomac, Maryland; and the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. A retrospective of the artist's prints will open at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich on September 22, 2010, and will travel to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark in Spring 2011. Opening in January 2011, the Santa Monica Museum of Art, California, will present a focused overview of two bodies of work by the artist, *Wire Instruments* and *Pet Stain Removal Devices*.

1 Al Taylor, in Ulrich Loock and Al Taylor, "A Conversation," in *Al Taylor*. Exh. cat. (Bern, Switzerland: Kunsthalle Bern, 1992), p. 34.

2 Al Taylor, unpublished artist's statement, July 1990.

3 Al Taylor, in Ulrich Loock and Al Taylor, "A Conversation," p. 42.