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**AQNB PRESENTS: TASTE & DISCERNMENT**

MAX GÖRAN & SAMUEL ACEVEDO

APRIL 27—JUNE 30, 2024

OPENING RECEPTION: 6–9 PM, APRIL 27, 2024

Curated by Steph Kretowicz

The nature of taste and beauty has long been associated with various notions of morality and superiority. Between Kant’s “aesthetic judgment” and Bourdieu’s “cultural capital,” the concept of the art gallery as a space for assigning value and power to objects and ideas is hardly a new one—with many less archetypical contemporary philosophers and theorists contributing to the field of thought.

The *AQNB Presents: Taste & Discernment* duo exhibition, featuring Max Göran and Samuel Acevedo, sometimes playfully, sometimes obnoxiously, considers the possibilities for trespass and participation in the fickle world of creative production, with its ever-fluctuating relationship to “high” and “low” cultural codes. In the case of the two presented artists, blue-collar references are reassigned to the gallery floor, as both corrupting and antiseptic agents of assimilation. Göran’s video, sculpture, and ceramics demonstrate the beauty of his inanimate objects, when detached from their utility and observed from a distance. Acevedo’s drawing and sculpture practice probes themes of alienation and systemic trauma through his fierce reclamation of racial and cultural signifiers crossing DIY noise and punk, along with what he calls his “peasant mannerisms.”

Curator Steph Kretowicz takes the show’s title from Vika Kirchenbauer’s 2024 film *COMPASSION AND INCONVENIENCE*, with its meticulous reconstruction of the first public art exhibition (in the mid-18th century) and the precedents it set of institutionalized discrimination and structural violence. *Taste & Discernment* embraces the “disagreeable prostitution of the polite arts”—as one disgruntled exhibitor called the 1760 exhibition for its admittance of “kitchen-maids and stable boys”—and additionally questions whether such inclusiveness is genuinely possible.

In the words of Sianne Ngai, “The ability to extract pleasure from the aesthetic dimensions of life has itself become a kind of class privilege.” So if two broke artists of varying intersections of marginality produce an art show, do they get an upgrade as well?

There will be a live performance and activation by Acevedo in May, as well as an accompanying screening including video work by Kirchenbauer, Göran, Cristine Brache, and Rita Macedo at the end of June. Dates to be announced.

**Max Göran** is an artist and filmmaker who lives and works between Berlin and Sweden. He holds an MFA from Goldsmiths and has studied with Josephine Pryde at the Berlin University of the Arts. Göran has previously presented solo exhibitions at Cell Project Space in London and at Jenny's Gallery in Los Angeles. His work has also been shown at festivals and in group exhibitions at galleries and institutions across Europe and the UK, such as Galerie Neu in Berlin; Copenhagen's CPH:DOX, Kasseler Dokfest; the 7th Edition of the Athens Biennale; Kunstverein München, European Media Art Festival Osnabrück, and New Contemporaries in London.

**Samuel Acevedo** is a Los Angeles-based artist and musician born in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Through both physical works and live performance, his practice concentrates on the exploration of the compulsive inclination towards ghoulish mental seclusion. Acevedo has presented art performances and installations throughout Europe, including the 59th Venice Biennale, Kaserne Space in Basel, Milan's Terraforma Festival, and Unsound in Krakow. Visual art installations and group exhibitions appear at the Reykjavik Art Festival, Lomex Gallery in New York, Berlin's Trauma Bar und Kino, and Berlin Art Week, among others.

**Steph Kretowicz** is a Los Angeles-based interdisciplinary writer, editor, and journalist specializing in music, contemporary art, and online culture. Her work has been published in Flash Art, Resident Advisor, FACT, and The Wire, as well as The Guardian, Dazed, and Oxford Artistic and Practice Based Research Platform, among others. Kretowicz is founder and editor of London arts publication AQNB, and writer and associate curator at Creamcake in Berlin. She is also author of 2017 novel and cross-media narrative *Somewhere I've Never Been*, published by TLTRPreß, and director of the 2021 radio play *I hate it here*, produced with Ben Babbitt and felicity, and released via CURL Recordings.

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