

**MEDIA
RELEASE**



TOM POLO
GESTURES AND MISTAKES

EXHIBITION DATES 3 FEBRUARY - 10 MARCH 2012

Tom Polo's work takes inspiration from the performance of anxiety. Exploring, exaggerating and mocking moments of self-reflection, self-sabotage, self-help, self-indulgence and self-aggrandising, and he pushes self-doubt towards its cringe-worthy limits.

Building on several projects staged in 2011 whilst in residence at Acme Studios, London, Polo's first project at Gertrude Contemporary will occupy the Front Gallery space and comprise a series of sculptural paintings and a large immersive wall-painting.

Playing on the Gallery's street frontage and stage-like structure, Polo will further explore the wall painting as a performance of working and re-working of a problem where the site, materials and scale operate in opposition. Polo intends to 'solve' and 're-solve' the painting, which will remain in continuous flux throughout the exhibition period. Perhaps exemplifying why a work should not extend beyond the canvas, Polo's wall-drawing attempts to thwart expectation and forces the work beyond resolution, into chaos or failure. Working against artistic modes of production, presentation, and encounter, this new work intends to deliberately spoil the spectacle for the viewer, which will exist as evidence of an obliterated and over-painted work that obscures a completed original.

With works entitled, "Understudy", "Disappointed in Everything (it happens)", and "SELF SABBO TAGE/Maybe One Day", Polo's practice is the evidence of anxious artistic production. Polo is interested in pitting the

language and tone of self-help and motivational speaking against the idea of art work as a laboured-over, balanced and complete ornament.

Tom Polo lives and works in Sydney. In 2011 he undertook the Australia Council London Studio Residency and held his first international solo exhibition at Acme Project Space, London. Polo completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW. In 2007 he was awarded a studio residency at Parramatta Artists Studios and held his first solo exhibition, *An Excessive Aesthetic* at Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney. Since then, Polo has exhibited in numerous exhibitions at Gallery 9 (2007), Campbelltown Arts Centre (2009), Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (2009) and Grantpirrie (2011). He is the recent recipient of the Art and Australia/Credit Suisse Contemporary Art Award and is currently completing a Masters of Fine Arts at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW.

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