



# THE IDIOT. TONY MATELLI

23 September—28 December 2009

Tony Matelli's hyperrealistic sculptures invite viewers into scenes charged with tension, ambiguity, and subtle irony. With a refined command of material and form, Matelli examines the complexities of contemporary life—its contradictions, dissonances, and the thin line between control and chaos. His works appear deceptively straightforward, yet beneath their surfaces lies a web of layered associations, transforming familiar objects into powerful and often unsettling symbols.

In this exhibition, Matelli presents a group of works that explore themes of fragility, resistance, and human imperfection with his signature blend of realism and conceptual edge.

*The Idiot* is a wall-mounted bronze sculpture that replicates an empty Budweiser beer box, pierced with openings to resemble a makeshift birdhouse. Originally conceived as a street intervention, the work introduces live birds into the gallery space, where they freely inhabit the sculpture. This unexpected gesture transforms the sterile environment of the white cube into a living narrative—improvised, absurd, and deeply resonant.

*F#ck It, Free Yourself!* stages an act of symbolic refusal. Made of porcelain and steel, two hundred-dollar bills burn perpetually on a table, becoming emblems of defiance against the logic of consumerism. The piece evokes the tension between individual agency and

the value systems that shape modern life—pointing to the futility of resistance within structures powerful enough to absorb even protest.

*Weeds*, a continuation of Matelli's acclaimed series of bronze plant sculptures, disrupts the gallery's pristine geometry. Hand-painted plants appear to sprout directly from the flat concrete floors and corners of the space. This quiet rupture of the controlled, sterile environment evokes themes of resilience and irrepressibility. Both poetic and insistent, the weeds become emblems of endurance and quiet resistance within spaces not meant to accommodate them:

**"Weeds are constantly being eradicated because they remain as nagging reminders of our fallibility and vanity. At the same time, they are heroic symbols. They're triumphant—unwanted, but very successful. This has intense personal resonance with me. Weeds are the underdog."**

— Tony Matelli

Matelli's practice maintains a quiet yet persistent dialogue with the viewer, probing the nature of perception, order, and autonomy. These works leave interpretation deliberately open—they invite reflection, challenging us to reconsider what we expect from art, from objects, and from ourselves.

Tony Matelli's work has been exhibited internationally at leading institutions including Kunsthalle Wien (Vienna, Austria), Centre d'Art Santa Mònica (Barcelona, Spain), Uppsala Kunstmuseum (Uppsala, Sweden), and Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France).



**GARY TATINTSIAN GALLERY**

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