

79 Walker Street
New York NY 10013
T_ 212 219 04 73
F_ 212 219 05 11
artingeneral.org



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Isola and Norzi's First Solo U.S. Exhibition Recalls Jacques Cousteau's Utopian Spirit at Art in General and the New York Aquarium

Contact

Claire Sexton
212.219.0473 x31
press@artingeneral.org



Isola and Norzi
Liquid Door
April 23 – June 4, 2010

Reviving Jacques Cousteau's utopian dream of living underwater, Isola and Norzi's first solo U.S. exhibition, *Liquid Door*, is an ongoing deep sea exploration that begins as a series of ephemeral and performative aquatic investigations at the exhibits of the New York Aquarium at Coney Island, Brooklyn and ultimately ends at Cousteau's original underwater structure off the coast of Sudan. Inspired by the intangible threshold of the liquid door— a surface between air and water created only by the pressure of the air inside an underwater living space —the resulting exhibition at Art in General features a series of new works that examine the aesthetic, social, and domestic interface between man and sea.

Isola and Norzi's work has explored architecture as a site for minimal, poetic gestures that reveal the threshold between fiction and possibility. These interventions take shape as sculptures and installations that uncover hidden light shafts, patterns in the dust, and embedded telescopes that shift both perception and expectation. Inspired by the idea of a flooded museum as new site for such intervention, the artists' recent work has taken them across the Indian Ocean and diving to the underwater ruins of Jacques Cousteau's Starfish House in the Red Sea.

As an integral part of this ongoing research the artist's collaboration with the New York Aquarium reveals new possibilities for underwater exploration. The resulting exhibition at Art in General features a series of new works inspired by this research and the Aquarium itself. Combining references to Italian Mannerism, minimalist forms, and Cousteau's architectural plans for an underwater aquarium, the artist's sculptural works reckon with the possibility of deep sea domestic life and the prospect of failure inherent the proposal for living underwater. Likewise, photographs and video work play with the reflective and revealing characteristics of both water and glass. *Liquid Door* repurposes the mise-en-scène of this other-worldly, deep sea experience, to create a formal exploration of the familiar structures of the aquarium as the threshold of perception and imagination.

Hilario Isola and Matteo Norzi (b. Torino, 1976) have worked collaboratively since 2003, pooling their backgrounds and interests in art history, museology, and architecture. The duo has exhibited internationally, including at David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Smack Mellon, NY; Sculpture Center, NY; Artists Space, NY; China National Academy, Beijing; HDLU, Zagreb; Valentina Bonomo Arte Contemporanea, Rome; Spinola Banna Foundation for the Arts, Turin. Their works have been reviewed in various publications, including *Artforum*, *Flash Art*, *C Magazine*, *Above Magazine*, and *Abitare*. In 2008/2009, they were artists-in-residence at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council in New York and the Headlands Center for the Arts in San Francisco, CA. Isola and Norzi have lived and worked in New York since 2007.

Liquid Door was created in collaboration with The New York Aquarium as part of Art in General's New Commissions program. Launched in 2005, the New Commissions program centers on developing and exhibiting new and challenging projects by artists. The projects are presented through exhibitions, events, or other forms of programming at Art in General. Isola and Norzi's project is one of six such commissions this year.

Art in General will publish an artist book about *Liquid Door* in fall 2010 as part of the New Commissions publication series.

Support

General support of Art in General is provided by General Tools LLC; Abraham and Lillian Rosenberg Foundation; Starry Night Fund of Tides Foundation; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; National Endowment for the Arts; Carnegie Corporation of New York; public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; Jerome Foundation; AG Foundation; Miller-Sweezy Charitable Trust; Lily Auchincloss Foundation; Bloomberg; Cowles Charitable Trust; Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation; Foundation for Contemporary Arts; The Liman Foundation; NYU Community Fund; and by individuals.

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About Art in General

Founded in 1981 in Lower Manhattan, Art in General is a nonprofit organization that assists artists with the production and presentation of new work. It changes in response to the needs of artists and engages the public with their work. Since it was established, the organization has emerged as one of New York City's leading nonprofits devoted to supporting and stimulating the creation of contemporary art,

providing an environment in which artists may exhibit unconventional work and exchange ideas with their peers.

Location: 79 Walker Street, NYC, at the southeast corner of Cortland Alley. One block south of Canal Street, between Lafayette and Broadway.

Subway directions: take the 6, A-C-E, N-Q-R-W, or J-M-Z to Canal Street.

Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday 12-6 pm.

Admission: Always free.

Art in General's 6th Floor Gallery and restrooms are wheelchair accessible, and we can provide assistance to visitors with disabilities as requested.