

ARTFORUM

FEBRUARY 2013

By **Caroline Hancock**

Victor Boulet

GALERIE JOSEPH TANG

1 rue Charles-François Dupuis, Building B, 2nd Floor

November 3 – December 15 2012



View of “Victor Boulet,” 2012.

The title of this show, “Yellow Pong Monger,” sets the tone for the brilliantly insane installation by Victor Boulet at Galerie Joseph Tang. A provocatively yet playfully racist reference to the gallerist himself, the words both criticize the commercial setup into which Tang has drawn the artist and point to the smell—pong is British slang for “odor”—that will grow foul as dim sum and noodles, piled up on a tabletop and in a bucket, rot away. Supermarket meat packaging, local “Boucherie des Archives” wrapping, and blood-stained kitchen paper are some of the remnants of delightful French foodstuffs that accompany the Chinese leftovers. Beef bourguignon recipes feature, too, in this accumulation of cultural clichés. In a partial nod to New York’s recently Sandy-carnaged art districts, the room, usually pristine, has been ripped apart and covered with checkered plastic tablecloth, pasted printouts and images, a series of French tricolor paintings hung among fake china, ridiculous plastic mouldings for the ceilings, and so forth. There is a Thomas Hirschhorn air both to the broom covered in brown tape next to the graffitied word CHINAMAN, and to the Parisian street pillar that turns Tang’s radiator into a sculpture and disrupts the heating system. A female nude plaster sculpture on a makeshift pedestal is attired with a jug, mittens, and a plate artistically covered in blue paint.

The Norwegian-Scottish artist is “green in DA face” with conceptual disappointment, according to the archives, animated videos, and websites attached to his project. Over the years, Boulet has developed multiple personalities and activities which allow him to constantly confuse and complicate any agenda. Perhaps the most well known is the Institute of Social Hypocrisy, a program of events he orchestrated in this space before Tang turned it into a commercial gallery in 2011. This relentless interrogating, complex layering, and tongue-in-cheek blurring persist in the current installation. Boulet’s fiction is pushed to literary heights in the accompanying text by Stian Gabrielsen, featuring fictionalized versions of Tang himself and Mona Høiness, a Nordic lawyer and celebrity.

— Caroline Hancock