

COOLHUNTING.COM

March 11, 2009

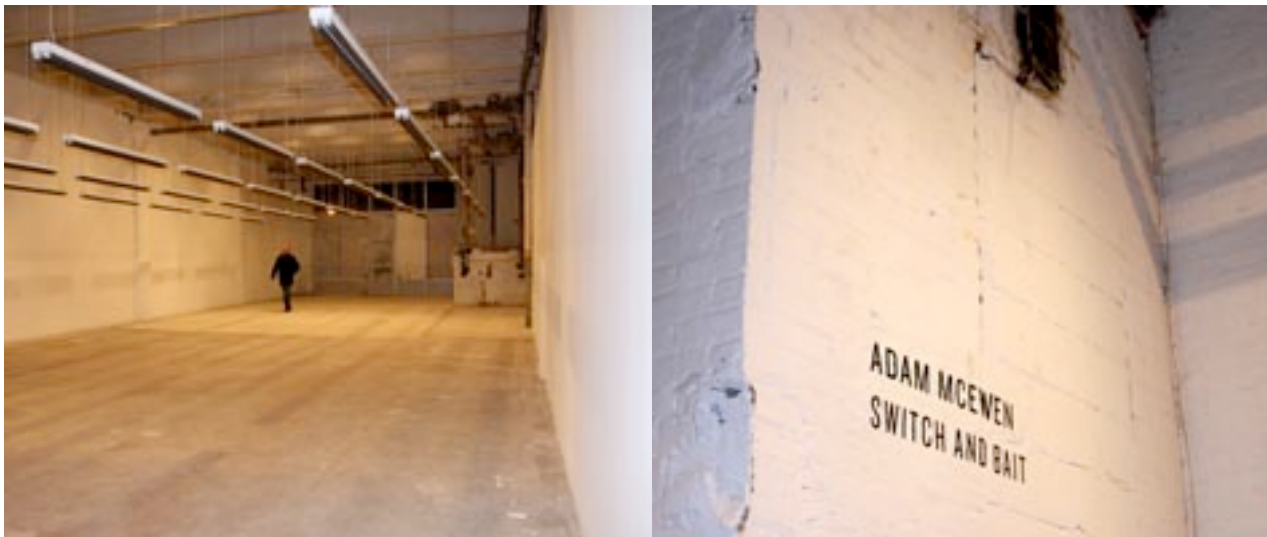
Adam McEwen: Switch and Bait

by Kelsey Keith



Adam McEwen is irreverent, witty, and whip smart (like any British artist worth his salt) and "Switch and Bait," [his latest show](#) with veteran gallerist Nicole Klagsbrun, is no exception. The exhibition, which opened last week in an auxiliary space in New York's Chelsea district, was slyly promoted with a press release detailing the process of machined graphite. "Graphite's specific properties, such as stability under high temperatures, make it essential to the steel industry, the solar electrical industry and the missile manufacturing industry, among others," it reads. The mystery began.

Windows obscured, visitors enters a raw warehouse space with rows upon rows of "fluorescent" lighting. Next stop is a smaller, square room, empty but for a centered podium displaying what looks to be a credit card. Here's the trick: the lighting tubes and millimeters-thick card in the installation were fabricated by McEwen out of solid graphite. In a novel twist, McEwen personalizes every credit card purchased with the buyer's name. Two extra samples at the gallery allow for holding the pieces to fully realize how resilient the material is despite its delicate weight. Graphite is, after all, carbon-based and cousin to the diamond.



[Adam McEwen's](#) past work includes a series of obituaries written about living celebrities, haiku-like text messages taken out of context and framed and a realistic oil painting of an air conditioner. Irreverent? Why, yes. McEwen hopes the air conditioner painting will be hung high on a wall, near the ceiling, of a fancy house with central heat and air.

Switch and Bait Through 18 April 2009

[Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery](#) 520 West 20th Street Chelsea, New York City [map](#)tel. +1 212 243 3335