

**Kerry Skarbakka: *The Struggle to Right Oneself: A Survey***  
**&**  
**Sebastian Martorana: *Uncommissioned Memorials***  
**December 19-February 6**

**Reception, Video Screening, and Performance**  
**Saturday, January 9, 2010, 6:30-9:00PM**

Irvine Contemporary is pleased to present two concurrent solo exhibitions by gallery artists: a survey of Kerry Skarbakka's ongoing photography project, *The Struggle to Right Oneself*, and new sculptures by Sebastian Martorana, *Uncommissioned Memorials*. Reception with the artists: Saturday, January 9, 6:30-9:00PM. The reception will include a screening of Kerry Skarbakka's new video, *The Attraction of Elements*, with live music by Yoko K, who composed the music track for the video.



Kerry Skarbakka, *Window*, 2009. C-Print. 50 x 60 in.



Kerry Skarbakka, *Grass (Triptych)*, 2009. C-Print. 50 X 60 in.

**Kerry Skarbakka:**  
***The Struggle to Right Oneself: A Survey***

In his second solo exhibition with Irvine Contemporary, Kerry Skarbakka presents a survey of works from his series, *The Struggle to Right Oneself*, including new works exhibited for the first time. In Kerry Skarbakka's ongoing project, the artist stages himself in scenes of losing balance and control, especially at a crucial tipping point, the moment when balance and equilibrium are lost and a fall begins. His arresting photographs appear at the intersection of performance and artist's portraits, and each composition dramatizes one of the deepest human themes--the anxiety over losing balance and the struggle to regain it, both personally and socially.

Kerry Skarbakka's photographs are actual shots of the artist in the scene, and only the rigging or wires used by the artist for staging the shot are removed from the final print. The photographs also record a deep sense of risk-taking and physical danger for the artist, who continually seeks out physically demanding locations and sets in the search of the right arresting image. Presenting his performative personae as "everyman" figures that represent the human condition, the artist creates images that compel viewers to identify emotionally with the scene and the moment captured.

**About the Artist**

Kerry Skarbakka has an MFA in Photography from Columbia College, Chicago, IL, and has received numerous awards and commissions, including a Creative Capital Foundation Grant, a Light Work artist's residency, and a public art commission by the City of Seattle. His work been exhibited internationally, including gallery exhibitions in Chicago, Seattle, Antwerp, Belgium, New York, and Los Angeles, and in major art fairs (Photo London, Paris Photo, PhotoMiami, and The Armory Show). Kerry Skarbakka now lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA.

**Sebastian Martorana:**  
*Uncommissioned Memorials*

Sebastian Martorana's first solo exhibition with Irvine Contemporary, *Uncommissioned Memorials*, consists of new sculptures in marble that also represent works in a long-term thematic series.

The works in the exhibition address the themes of everyday objects, memory and memorialization, and the cultural meaning of sculptural materials. Sebastian Martorana utilizes the traditional medium of marble and other stone materials to create highly original sculptures based on domestic objects approached with a masterful realist style. He transforms objects we associate with lightness (cloth, fabric, or paper) into a new reality, provoking a reflection on the metaphors of "lightness" and "weight" as we associate them with cultural forms.

His work reveals a keen understanding of the interplay of artifice and the traditional function of memorials--creating stable icons of memory detached from history or real events. He shows how the codes for memorials, which we know mainly in stone, can be appropriated to create "memorials to the everyday" that may be completely fictive but thoroughly convincing.

Sebastian Martorana also works as a professional stone carver, and he has worked on many "commissioned" monuments in the Washington region. His *Uncommissioned Memorials* project plays on one of the known roles of the stone sculptor, while turning the idea of "memorialization" toward a new conceptual direction.



Sebastian Martorana, *Shed*, 2009. Marble. 31 x 10 x 8 in.

**About the Artist**

Sebastian Martorana received his MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and was selected for Irvine Contemporary's *Introductions4* exhibition in July 2008. He was awarded a residency at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, VT, in 2008. Sebastian Martorana lives and works in Baltimore, MD.

For further information and available works, contact Lauren Gentile, Assistant Director and Director of Sales (202-332-8767, [lauren@irvinecontemporary.com](mailto:lauren@irvinecontemporary.com)).