

# ARTFORUM

## Falke Pisano

THE SHOWROOM  
63 Penfold Street  
May 1–June 15

Falke Pisano's solo debut in the United Kingdom takes up the mercurial nature of the mental condition, providing an unsettling representation of the mind. Consider *5 Black Boards*, 2011-2013, an ongoing project that consists of six chalkboards featuring drawings by the artist. Each time Pisano presents this work, she brushes away her previous work and creates a new one. That said, dusty remnants of past chalk sketches conspicuously haunt the background—a wink at the process of erasure itself. Here, the artist presents drawings relating to her research on the human body as well as imagery based on medical history. Together, the boards recall the dawn of rational humanism during the Renaissance and the advent of modern medicine in the late eighteenth century. The inherently temporary nature of her project evokes mental flux and instability, while the history of medicine hovers like a specter, at once ephemeral and formidable.



Falke Pisano, *Structure for Repetition (not Representation)*, 2011-13, wood, fabric, collage, blackboards, chalk, dimensions variable.

See also two videos, *Composition* and *Disorder of Composition*, both part of the series “Disordered Bodies Fractured Minds (Private M., Patient A. & Traveller H.),” 2012, which feature the voice of a person—a male in one, Pisano in the other—recounting stories taken from various texts and reports of mental and physical breakdowns following trauma, mental illness, and substance abuse. In both videos, the monologues run over a disjointed series of images, creating a visual and audible stream of consciousness, musing on the state of the speakers’ self-professed insanity.

An overwhelming presence in the exhibition is the main installation, *Structure for Repetition (not Representation)*, 2011–, for which the artist has hung black curtains throughout the space. It dominates the gallery like a diabolic labyrinth, with dark fabric looming ominously above the other smaller works. In the same way that history both supports and haunts Pisano’s work, the installation simultaneously forms a shadow over these smaller pieces and provides them with their architecture. The structure’s placement next to the Showroom’s large wall-length windows leaves it vulnerable to the changing elements, a backdrop for pathetic fallacy.

— Ashitha Nagesh