

Tim Noble & Sue Webster

Nihilistic Optimistic

Blain|Southern

4 Hanover Square

London W1

10th October – 24th November 2012

Private View: Tuesday 9th October, 6-8pm



Photo: Andy Keate

The Individual, 2011, Wooden stepladder, discarded wood,
light projector 193 x 299 x 69 cm

The Directors of Blain|Southern are delighted to present *Nihilistic Optimistic*, Tim Noble & Sue Webster's first major solo exhibition in London since 2006. Featuring six large-scale works, the show builds upon the artists' sustained investigation into self-portraiture, further deconstructing the relationship between materiality and form which has been so intrinsic to their practice.

Constructed principally from discarded wood, the artists describe these sculptures as 'street compositions'. Each work appears abstracted or even unfinished as the debris of the artists' studio – gathered sawdust, wood shavings and tools – lie scattered around the sculptures. A sense of urban chaos is implicit within the construction of the surrounding gallery environment; this is not an isolated white cube space, but one which remains connected to the studio and the streets – to the source of these artworks.

"There was a kind of deliberate choice not to use such recognisable objects any more, and to start fracturing things up - splintering things. So the mind has to wander in a different way, like you're giving and taking, and it's as much about the gaps and holes in between." Tim Noble

When illuminated, a number of the works cast shadow portraits upon the wall; the artists are represented both together and alone, as a unit and as individuals. In *My Beautiful Mistake* (2012), this light source is poignantly omitted, shifting the focus onto the tentative material composition of the sculpture itself, and its sense of impending destruction.

The exhibition's dualistic title, *Nihilistic Optimistic*, responds to the oppositional forces present within these works, and indeed within the artists themselves; the show is at once constructive and destructive, hopeful and despairing. Light and shadow, form and absence, figuration and abstraction all inform one another and exist in a constant state of tension.

A catalogue accompanies the exhibition, featuring contributions by Gustav Metzger, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Jon Savage. In collaboration with The Vinyl Factory, Tim Noble & Sue Webster have also produced a limited edition artwork in the form of a 10-inch record.

For further information on the exhibition, please contact Mark Inglefield
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Notes to Editors:

Tim Noble (born 1966) and Sue Webster (born 1967) met in 1986 while studying Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Turning the Seventh Corner*, Blain|Southern, Berlin (2011); *The Head of Isabella Blow*, National Portrait Gallery (solo room), London (2010); *20 Modern Classics*, Triumph Gallery, Moscow (2009); *Tim Noble & Sue Webster*, The Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas (2008); *Polymorphous Perverse*, Deitch Projects, New York (2008); *Electric Fountain*, Rockefeller Plaza, New York (2008); *Polymorphous Perverse*, The Freud Museum, London (2006); CAC, Malaga (2005); *Tim Noble & Sue Webster*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2004); *Tim Noble & Sue Webster*, P.S.1/MoMA, New York (2003); *Ghastly Arrangements*, Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes (2002); *Masters of the Universe*, Deste Foundation, Athens (2000); and *The New Barbarians*, The Chisenhale Gallery, London (1999). Group exhibitions include: *Burning, Bright: A Short History of the Light Bulb*, The Pace Gallery, New York (2011); *Family Ties*, GALERIE THOMAS, Munich (2011); *The Unconscious in Everyday Life*, Science Museum, London (2010); *Rude Britannia—British Comic Art*, Tate Britain, London (2010); *The Surreal House*, Barbican Art Gallery, London (2010); *Distortion: 53rd Venice Biennale*, The Gervasuti Foundation, Venice (2009); *Statuephilia: Contemporary sculptors at the British Museum*, The British Museum, London (2008); and *Apocalypse—Beauty and Horror in Contemporary Art*, The Royal Academy, London (2000). Tim Noble & Sue Webster's work is in numerous public and private collections, including the Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen; Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; National Portrait Gallery, London; Samsung Museum, Seoul; and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. In 2007 they received the prestigious Arken Prize for artistic achievement.