

Press Release – 20 August 2014

CONFLICT AND COLLISIONS: NEW CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE



THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD PRESENTS NEW AUTUMN SEASON FEATURING
THREE NEW SOLO EXHIBITIONS AND SITE-SPECIFIC COMMISSIONS BY ARTISTS
ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN, FOLKERT DE JONG, TOBY ZIEGLER

CONFLICT AND COLLISIONS: NEW CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE
1 OCTOBER 2014 – 25 JANUARY 2015
Free Admission

Alexandra Bircken: Eskalation
Folkert De Jong: The Holy Land
Toby Ziegler / Charles Sargeant Jagger

Press Preview: Tuesday 30 September, 11am – 3pm
Evening Preview: Tuesday 30 September, 6.30 – 8.30pm
Open to the public: Wednesday 1 October, 10am – 5pm

- *Conflict and Collisions* coincides with this year's WW1 commemorations, featuring three new solo exhibitions and site-specific commissions that consider themes of historical and contemporary conflict and of man versus machine and our relationship to technology
- Alexandra Bircken's exhibition will include works that refer to the American B-52 bomb, Mercedes gear-sticks and a new installation featuring leather 'skins' - reminiscent of deflated human bodies - adorning intersecting ladders, alluding to Barbara Hepworth's iconic stringed sculptures
- Taking historical objects from the Royal Armouries in Leeds and Wakefield's art collection at The Hepworth Wakefield respectively as their starting point, Folkert de Jong and Toby Ziegler use state-of-the art digital and 3D technologies to reconfigure the human form
- Folkert de Jong's new site-specific commission has focused on two elements of the Royal Armouries' national collection of arms and armour: the personal armour of Henry VIII and contemporary modern firearms
- Ziegler's new commission references his interrogation of 'war porn' imagery from conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan
- The Calder, The Hepworth Wakefield's contemporary art space, will showcase *Expanded Narcissistic Envelope*, Ziegler's series of new, aluminium sculptures, suggestive of human forms, modified through digital manipulation

CONFLICT AND COLLISIONS: NEW CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE

From 1 October 2014 until 25 January 2015, The Hepworth Wakefield presents its autumn season, *Conflict and Collisions: New Contemporary Sculpture*, comprising three solo exhibitions, each featuring a new, site-specific commission by contemporary artists: Alexandra Bircken, Folkert de Jong and Toby Ziegler.

Coinciding with this year's WW1 commemorations, *Conflict and Collisions: New Contemporary Sculpture*, considers themes of historical and contemporary combat and of man versus machine, juxtaposing handmade and hand-finished objects with mechanical weaponry, state-of-the art digital technologies and 3D printing.

ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN: ESKLATION

German artist Alexandra Bircken presents a series of recent works that showcase a new approach in her practice, as well as a new site-specific commission for The Hepworth Wakefield.

Through her latest work, *B.U.F.F.*, 2014, Bircken continues to explore her interest in reoccurring concepts within C20th sculpture: male versus female, and the handmade versus the mechanical. Comprising four component works (*Big*, 2014; *Ugly*, 2014; *Fat*, 2014; *Fellow*, 2014), *B.U.F.F.*, 2014 collectively refers to the American B-52 bombers, used by the United States Air Force from the 1950s. Made from wood, foam, plastic textiles and latex, the direct reference to weaponry and warfare is conversely sensualised through a textile 'skin', covering each component, coated in fabric and black latex. In *Mercedes and her Sisters*, 2014, Bircken explores the abstract and formal properties of objects by repurposing them as figurative sculptures, in this instance five gear-sticks represent five female forms.

In addition, Bircken will create a new, site-specific installation, interacting with the architecture of the geometric spaces designed by David Chipperfield Architects. A series of ladders across the spaces will recall Hepworth's 'stringed sculptures'. Adorned with a large number of 'skins', reminiscent of deflated human bodies, this element explores Bircken's interest in representing the fabric as skin, a type of clothing for the human body, a protective boundary.

FOLKERT DE JONG: THE HOLY LAND

Dutch artist Folkert de Jong's new site-specific commission draws on the collections of armour and contemporary weapons held by the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds. In particular, De Jong has focused on two elements of the Royal Armouries' collection: the personal armour of Henry VIII and contemporary modern firearms.

The suits of armour, made at different points in Henry VIII's life, demonstrate his changing body shape: from a lean, young man of twenty, to a considerably larger, older statesman. In addition, De Jong has selected contemporary weapons from the collection, including machine and hand guns. Both historical and contemporary objects have been reproduced using the latest 3D scanning process, reprinted as polystyrene figurations, reconfigured by the hand of the artist (degraded, damaged, or altered in scale), before their final presentation in bronze.

The finished bronzes will be presented within a sculptural installation that will include an armada of bronze ships and coloured acrylic display cases containing polystyrene sculptures and a sandpit, as visual connections to the casting and creative processes involved.

TOBY ZIEGLER / CHARLES SARGEANT JAGGER

British artist Toby Ziegler continues his long-standing interest in making visual connections between history, memory and digital technologies.

Ziegler takes as his starting point the WW1 plaster frieze from Wakefield's collection, *No Man's Land*, 1919-20 by renowned war memorial artist and Yorkshireman, Charles Sargeant Jagger (1885-

1934), to create a three-part sculptural composition, echoing the composition of the frieze.

This will be the first time in 20 years that the plaster version of Jagger's *No Man's Land* will be on public display. Supported within a network of aluminium joists, the frieze will overlook a three-metre high aluminium sculpture of a human foot. This new commission expands on Ziegler's interrogation of 'war porn' - trophy images posted online of war casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan. Dismembered limbs are reconfigured and abstracted using digital technologies.

The final element of the installation comprises a 3D printer that will produce a Newell teapot within the gallery space on a daily basis. Created in 1975 by early computer graphics researcher Martin Newell, this mathematical model serves as a test-card for reproducing a simple teapot and cites another instance of the potentially endless reproduction and of images and objects in the digital age.

Ziegler will also show new work in The Calder, The Hepworth Wakefield's contemporary art space, a 19th century former textiles mill situated in the gallery gardens. *Expanded Narcissistic Envelope* (1 October – 16 November) will incorporate a series of new, aluminium sculptures, whose reflective, multi-faceted surfaces directly reference their digital origins. These often unfold in pairs – one version in fully inflated 3D, the other, deflated or crumpled, lying low on the ground. Ziegler continues to explore the play between sculptural form and digital image through a series of architectural interventions and expansive printed surfaces.

Visitors can enjoy free admission to all three exhibitions within the new autumn season - *Conflict and Collisions: New Contemporary Sculpture*. In addition, there will be a number of related events and talks. For further details about these, as well as the gallery's autumn public programme and free, family-friendly activities visit www.hepworthwakefield.org or telephone 01924 247360.

ENDS

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

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The three exhibitions are supported by:

The Embassy of the Netherlands
The Henry Moore Foundation
James Cohan Gallery
Mondriaan Fund

ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN

Born 1967, Cologne, Germany. Lives and works in Cologne

Education:

2000-2008 Professor at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London, UK
1995 BA Fashion Design, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London, UK
1991 Fine Art Foundation, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London, UK

Recent Solo Exhibitions:

2014 Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam
The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England
The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Ireland

2013 BQ, Berlin, Germany

2012 Herald St, London, UK
Kunstverein Hamburg, Germany
Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany

2011 Studio Voltaire, London, UK
Kimmerich, New York, US

FOLKERT DE JONG

Born 1972 in Egmond aan Zee, The Netherlands
Lives and works in Amsterdam

EDUCATION

1998-2000 Rijksacademy for Visual Arts, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
1994-1996 Academy for Visual Arts, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

2014 The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, UK
"Hominid Land", Musée d'Evreux, Evreux, France
Desengaño, Galeria Luis Adelantado, Valencia, Spain

2013 Folkert de Jong: Amabilis insania. The pleasing delusion. Middelheim Museum, Antwerp

Folkert de Jong: Un Vie d'Illusions, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Rochechouart, France

Folkert de Jong: Actus Tragicus, MUDAM, Luxembourg, Luxembourg
Folkert de Jong, curated by Bruce Guenther, Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon
Villa Mondrian, Winterswijk, The Netherlands

- 2012 Act of Despair — Nature, Matter and Form
The Immortals, Dukan Hourdequin Gallery, Paris
Vitrine de la Maison du Peuple, Clichy
Arario Gallery, Seoul
The Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art
- 2011 Folkert de Jong: The Man from Delft, Galerie Fons Welters
Operation Harmony, James Cohan Gallery, New York
The Balance, Musas Museo de arte de Sonora, Mexico
Brandnew Gallery, Milan, Italy
Luis Adelantado Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2010 The Balance Luis Adelantado Gallery Mexico City

TOBY ZIEGLER

Born 1972 in London, UK.
Lives and works in London, UK

Education:
1991-1994 B.F.A. (Hons), Central St. Martin's School of Art, London, UK

Residencies:
2004-2006 Delfina Studios, London, UK

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 2014 Expanded Narcissistic Envelope, The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, UK
Toby Ziegler / Charles Sargeant Jagger, The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, UK
Toby Ziegler, NewArtCentre - Roche Court Sculpture Park & Gallery, Salisbury, UK
Toby Ziegler, Simon Lee Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2013 Borderline Something, Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, Germany
- 2012 The Cripples, off-site exhibition at a car park (Q-Park, 3-9 Old Burlington Street), London, UK
Toby Ziegler, Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK
- 2010 The Alienation of Objects, Project 176, Zabudowicz Collection, London, UK (exh. cat). This exhibition travelled to New Art Gallery, Walsall, UK (2011), Zabudowicz Collection, Sarisalvo, Finland (2012) and Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland (2012)

CHARLES SARGEANT JAGGER

Yorkshire-born Jagger was a highly regarded sculptor when in 1914 he gave up the Prix de Rome to enlist in the army. He was employed as a war artist in 1918 and began work on *No Man's Land* while convalescing from war wounds. The work grew out of Jagger's personal experience of Gallipoli and presents a stark, expressionist portrayal of the field of war as graveyard that dismissed metonymic or symbolic representation in favour of straight depiction. Corpses stranded on barbed wire are ranged across a ravaged landscape whilst the solitary live figure of the look-out in the foreground uses them for cover.

Although the work received critical acclaim, it was also roundly denounced by Roger Fry who described the work as full of 'effective, brutal, catch-penny vulgarity' and 'cheap and melodramatic sentiment,' which he attributed to 'the modern Belgians and Germans from whom (no doubt unconsciously) Mr. Jagger has picked up his ideas.' The cast frieze that was the subject of such disparagement is part of the Tate collection, currently reinstated as part of the new displays at Tate Britain. However the original plaster model was acquired by Wakefield Art Gallery in 1936, following a memorial exhibition with funds raised by public subscription. The original frieze differs significantly from the final work: it includes two lines from Beatrix Brice-Miller's poem, *To the Vanguard*: 'Oh, little mighty Force that stood for England/That, with your bodies for a living shield/guarded her slow awaking'. This was removed from the bronze cast due to ambiguity regarding Jagger's intention as to whether this phrase should be understood as ironic or sincere.

THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

The gallery is at the heart of Wakefield's regeneration. Designed by the internationally acclaimed practice, David Chipperfield Architects, it is funded by Wakefield Council and Arts Council England with additional funding from a number of charitable trusts and private individuals. The gallery opened on 21 May 2011 and welcomed its millionth visitor on 5 December 2013.

The Hepworth Wakefield, Gallery Walk, West Yorkshire, WF1 5AW

Free admission

Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm and 10am – 9pm on the Third Thursday of every month

Closed Mondays (except for Bank Holidays and school holidays) www.hepworthwakefield.org
01924 247360

The gallery should be cited in full, as *The Hepworth Wakefield* and not Hepworth Wakefield, Hepworth Gallery or any other configuration.

THE ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM, LEEDS

The Royal Armouries is home to the national collection of arms and armour, including artillery. It operates three museums in the UK at HM Tower of London, in Leeds and at Fort Nelson in Hampshire. For more information visit www.royalarmouries.org

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