

PRESS RELEASE

Darren Almond – Work Work Work solo exhibition at Galleri Bo Bjerggaard

Galleri Bo Bjerggaard is pleased to announce their first autumn exhibition: recent work by British artist Darren Almond. This is the artist's first solo presentation in Denmark.

Almond's diverse body of work incorporates film and video, drawing, painting, installation, sculpture and photography. In this exhibition, he revisits his long standing engagement with the development of the industrial age, its infrastructure, its consequences and its inherent effects on our culture.

The multi-channel sound and video installation *Less Than Zero* is the second part of a trilogy, beginning with *Anthropocene*, which depicts a journey through the post-industrial age. Following in the footsteps of the Russian poet Joseph Brodsky, the artist takes the audience to North Central Siberia. The cold, silent and empty landscape of Norilsk (formerly Norillag) is juxtaposed with the internal workings of the world's largest nickel mine, whose smelting plants have been in continuous operation since the 1950s. In contrast to the mines interior we are shown passages of the frozen Kara Sea, tracked by the artist's camera from onboard one of the Atomic icebreakers, ships that sustain the economic flow of this precious metal. What separates the two series of images is a constant, metronomic pouring of nickel, the product of human exploitation.

Accompanying the film is an hypnotic recitation of words taken from E.L. Doctorow's biography of nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer, known as the 'father of the atomic bomb': "It was first our weaponry and then our diplomacy, and now it's our economy. How can we suppose that something so monstrously powerful would not, after forty years, compose our identity? The great golem we have made against our enemies is our culture, our bomb culture – its logic, its faith, its vision."

Oppenheimer's story reminds us that our identity as a people remains intimately connected with the culture of things nuclear.

Either Side of Nothing is a two piece sculpture which typographically represents the symbols + and - . The title draws attention to the space between them which is 0. Almond states, "Without the idea of 'knowing nothing' we would be unable to comprehend anything. Without the zero we wouldn't have the negative as well as the positive." From the zero point, new knowledge and new insights can sprout, with the potential to bring about change.

In the new series of paintings entitled *Second Thoughts*, created specifically for this exhibition, horizontally-divided digits are painted with minimal typography and set against a grid pattern to form an infinitude of numeric combinations. The resulting compositions contain not only the numbers themselves, but also the empty space that is generated around them. Conceptually, they convey numeric dichotomies: addressing both the analogue and the digital, the figurative and the abstract.

The digits could be interpreted as sub-coordinates in space, time and the international digital economy. The title of the series is drawn from the Anglo-American poet W.H. Auden: "Blessed be all metrical rules that forbid automatic responses, force us to have second thoughts, free from the fetters of the Self." The artist

perhaps suggests 'second thoughts' on the relationship between environmental concerns and the necessity for nuclear power.

Fire Under Snow is part of the ongoing *Trainplate series*, initiated in 1997 with Intercity 125, a sign made by British Rail, which read 'Darren James Almond'. Concerned with transport, this series is emblematic of Almond's constant repositioning of the motifs of travel and exploration, frequently serving as punctuation points within his exhibitions.

The exhibition closes with Almond's large scale three-part photographic work *Night + Fog (Monchegorsk) (2)*. Aesthetically, this image appears peaceful and almost graphic in its simple expression; but beneath its snow-covered landscape lurks a different reality: the stark evidence of the suffocation of the both the local and global landscape by man's need for resources.

Darren Almond was born in Wigan, England in 1971 but lives and works in London. He has held numerous solo exhibitions internationally, including Tate Britain, London, Kunsthalle Zurich and K21, Düsseldorf. As part of the British YBA generation he was included in Saatchi's legendary *Sensation* exhibition (1997-1999) and in 2005 he was nominated for the Turner Prize. Last winter, several of his works were shown at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen in the exhibition *Arctic*.

All are welcome to attend the opening reception, which will take place on Friday 22 August from 4.00-6.00 PM. The exhibition *Work Work Work* can be seen at Galleri Bo Bjerggaard until 18 October 2014.

Images are attached to this email. Further information and photographic materials may be obtained from Bolette Skibild: boletteskibild@bjerggaard.com