

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOBY ZIEGLER: THE SUDDEN LONGING TO COLLAPSE 30 YEARS OF DISTANCE



7 SEPTEMBER – 14 OCTOBER 2020
PRIVATE VIEW: SATURDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2 – 8 PM
SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present *The sudden longing to collapse 30 years of distance*, Toby Ziegler's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery, in which the artist explores the complex relationships between experience and memory, image and data, through the twin lens of figuration and abstraction.

The exhibition can be experienced in two dramatically different states. The gallery is lined with a group of large geometric, non-figurative works on paper, reminiscent of Ziegler's early works, juxtaposed with a group of smaller more figurative oil paintings on aluminium. Periodically though, the tranquil space of the gallery is transformed into a multi-projector video installation, in which a barrage of projected images covers the walls and overlays the 2D works, to a soundtrack that oscillates between melody and noise.

In the works on paper, Ziegler takes as his point of departure a group of 'ghost files': digital images he lost to an unresponsive hard drive fifteen years ago that have recently been retrieved. Rather than returning to the original idea – distorted by the intervening years – Ziegler reconciles the past and present in an entirely new narrative, reactivating the files from their years of suspended animation.

In the oil paintings, which refer to works by Poussin and Jan Van Eyck amongst others, the artist expands this concept, connecting his interest in the abstraction of memory to a broader art historical context. Using an orbital sander to efface the surface of the panel, Ziegler directly contrasts the time-consuming process of figurative painting with the rapidity of erasure. Yet, these works give themselves to the viewer very slowly, compressing time, from the facture of the source painting and its ensuing life span, to Ziegler's own reincarnation of the image. The strong formal connection that links the works connects Ziegler's early and recent practice. Both sets of works walk the line between representation and abstraction, collapsing narrative and pictorial space at the risk of dissolving into pure abstraction.

In Ziegler's new video diptych, one projection shows a sequence of images relating to historical forms of divination, such as geomancy, extispicy and tarot. The artist has fed these source images into an online similar image search, and presents the results in another projection, as an accelerating sequence of thousands of jpegs which morph from the original. Though 'visually similar', the algorithm throws up images that are wildly incongruous in content,

12 BERKELEY STREET
LONDON W1J 8DT
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

SIMON LEE GALLERY LTD
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND 4316341
GB 788 061 692

juxtaposing fairy-tale cottages with an exploding sperm whale. These sequences reveal systemic stereotypes and power structures prevalent on the internet, but Ziegler also seems to be examining the human predisposition to find meaning and pattern in seemingly random arrangements of images.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Toby Ziegler

Toby Ziegler was born in 1972 and lives and works in London, UK. His work has been shown extensively internationally and has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including the Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania, Australia (2018); Simon Lee Gallery, Hong Kong (2018); New Art Centre, Roche Court, Salisbury, UK (2017); Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2016); The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK (2014); Old Burlington Car Park, London, UK (2012); Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK which travelled to Sarisalvo, Finland, New Art Gallery, Walsall, UK and Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland (2011-2012). His work is part of major private and public collections including The Arts Council of England, UK; The British Council, UK; Tate, London, UK; François Pinault Foundation, Venice, Italy; Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK; Goss-Michael Foundation, London, UK; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France; British Airways Collection, UK; Hudson Valley Centre for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, NY and Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania.

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme. In 2014, Simon Lee Gallery opened an office and private viewing space in New York. In 2017, this space was re-launched with a year-round programme of exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of emerging and established artists in dynamic group and solo exhibitions.

Visiting Simon Lee Gallery

Simon Lee Gallery's focus is first and foremost on protecting our visitor's health and wellbeing as you visit the gallery. As such, we have implemented a booking system to ensure that social distancing is safely exercised at all times. Please visit our website or email info@simonleegallery.com to reserve a time to attend the private view event or, to visit the gallery throughout the duration of the exhibition.

WARNING: This exhibition contains graphic images and flashing lights which may not be suitable for people with photosensitive epilepsy. Viewer discretion is advised.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery
www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Toby Ziegler, *The evil that men do*, 2020. Oil on aluminium, 99.7 x 84.1 cm (39 1/4 x 33 1/8 in.) Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

For further press information, images and requests please contact Julia Kelly Kennedy: julia@simonleegallery.com / +44 (0) 207 491 0100.

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