

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS
CONSUMABLES**

3 FEBRUARY - 20 MARCH 2015

PRIVATE VIEW: MONDAY, 2 FEBRUARY, 6-8 PM

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present Hugh Scott-Douglas' first exhibition at the gallery, the artist's first solo show in London.

Hugh Scott-Douglas' work situates itself at the confluence of a number of critical, socio-political, economic and aesthetic observations and investigations. Amongst them are the contested status of images and their vessels and supports at a historical moment which might be defined in terms of the gradual and indecisive transition from analogue to digital systems. One series of works in this exhibition, entitled 'Active Surplus', uses the plastic sleeves that were once ubiquitous as the envelopes used to hold and protect negative film after photographic processing. Now largely obsolete, the sleeves are bought up and sold on by online surplus dealers. The use-value of the original commodity is inefficiently translated into material value. Scott-Douglas' use of the sleeves parallels this transformation, calling attention to the material's physical and aesthetic properties, as well as the sleeves' ability to contain and transfer meaning and resonance while themselves remaining empty.

A second series of works develops the theme. 'Heavy Images' consist of expired billboard images, printed on vinyl, folded and rolled onto neatly bundled units. Repurposed as covers for farmers' crops, pond liners, patches for damaged doors or sculptures, these once weightless .tiff files, their photographic images obscured, now demand significant infrastructure to facilitate their movement through the world. This infrastructure calls to mind the surrogate economy to which these exhausted images belong, and particularly the mechanics of transfer of value itself from image to object.

While formally Scott-Douglas' work positions itself in relation to recent developments in painting and particularly the process-orientated vocabulary of conceptual abstraction, these concerns reveal the closer relationship the work has to contemporary photographic practice. The importance of time in the work underscores this affinity. While works in the 'Active Surplus' and 'Heavy Images' series draw on the tangible sense of expiration, depletion and nostalgia inherent in their materials, the third series shown here declares a much more direct reference to Time.

Pages appropriated from maintenance manuals for Patek Philippe watches are combined with 'Screentone' prints, a technique Scott-Douglas has used across a number of recent bodies of work. In referencing a brand whose byline proposes a fetishisation of the notion of value through longevity and inheritance, this series of works might be seen to represent a counterpoint to the notions of obsolescence or forced depreciation which recur elsewhere in Scott-Douglas' work. The artist superimposes a sheet of 'Letratone' onto the pages, an adhesive graphic device developed by Letraset to import the affect of photomechanical reproduction into amateur or 'hobby' drawings (Letratone was itself a commodity which enjoyed a relatively short use-value). Before use, the adhesive sheets are depleted by being applied to debris-covered surfaces in the artist's studio, sandwiching in between the image and the graphic element particles of dust and impurity which pollute the image.

The final series of work in the exhibition mines images from "The Economist" magazine. The photographs in the magazine's global reports have a unique status in their relationship to the text they accompany; with no bylines and few explicit credits, they stand ambiguously between stock photography and photojournalism. Scott-Douglas uses acrylic gel to lift the pigment of the images from the paper, and then transforms them into photographic positives, enlarging them and printing with UV curable ink directly onto their large format supports. Shown as diptychs, the same image repeated in monochrome alongside the polychrome version, and lifted from their context these images become floating signifiers, their references and associations multiplied.

Hugh Scott-Douglas (b. 1988 in Cambridge, UK) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *Promises to Pay in Solid Substance*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco, CA (2014); *Hugh Scott-Douglas, eyes without a face*, Croy Nielsen, Berlin, Germany (2014); *A Broken Mule*, Kaikai Kiki Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2014); *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, CA (2013) and *A Cashed Cheque, A Canceled Stamp*, Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2012). Recent group exhibitions have included *Stars & Stripes: American Art of the 21st Century from the Goldberg Collection*, Museum & Galleries of NSW, Sydney, Australia (2014); *In ___ We Trust: Art and Money*, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH (2014); *In Transit: Between Image and Object*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2014); *Pattern: Follow the Rules*, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University, MI (2013). His work is included in public and private collections internationally including The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), CA; Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University, MI; and Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX.

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