

Robert McNally

Auf Wiedersehen

Preview: Friday 16th June
6pm – 8pm

Exhibition continues:
17th June – 29th July
Opening hours:
Tuesday – Saturday 11am – 5pm



Workplace Gateshead is delighted to present *Auf Wiedersehen*, a solo exhibition of new and existing work by Robert McNally. His first exhibition in his hometown and first UK solo exhibition outside of London.

McNally creates complex drawings from memory, mediating thought and emotions into a world far from the language of words. His layered drawings simultaneously echo the cram a universe-into-an-atom type of density found in the paintings by Hieronymus Bosch and the absurd, chaotic and confrontational narratives in the videos and installations of Paul McCarthy.

Morphing into layers of unraveling story threads emptying out into fluent, linear, pictorial fictions, constructed meaning becoming truth is at the heart of his work. From mass-media and news channels to the zone where the Dark Arts meet pseudo-science the subjects of McNally's work consist in denial, ignorance, ridiculousness, satire, parable, allegory, hypocrisy, anachronism, relationship with history, ambivalence, and the fine line between faith and understanding, manipulation and gullibility. McNally's incredible technique employs similar ruses, tricking the eye, and confounding the viewer. The works also serve to reinforce the artist's belief in art, as he says:

Art has similarities to the mechanics of mysticism, the currency and value being largely subjective, the effect questionable and the interpretation often so utterly broad as to render it almost meaningless. But I am able to live by art's honesty that it is man made and that I don't need a medium to explain it to me.

For his exhibition at Workplace Gateshead McNally brings together works that examine the extremities of our culture. From the perspective of 'ex-pat' Geordie artist currently living and working in cosmopolitan Berlin, McNally particularly and directly confronts the absurdity of British Culture.

Blackeye Fridays 2016 depicts the carnage of the most popular night in the year for office and factories Christmas parties, which consequently makes it one of the busiest nights in the year for ambulances and the police in the UK. A wild scene of bulging muscles, flailing clenched fists, spilt drinks, and flying high-heeled shoes is played out to a backdrop of revelers and vacant drunken faces.

Another work that shows an apparently medieval scene of drink and debauchery is entitled *Inselaffen (alternative ending to the Bayeux tapestry No.1)* 2017. The word *Inselaffen* translates as 'Island monkeys' or 'island oafs' and refers to the German (and other European countries) stereotypical image of the English as heavy drinking, violent, criminalistic and yobbish, characteristics of the English regularly witnessed by Europeans when visiting the UK, while on holiday elsewhere or at football matches. German people offer this behavior as evidence to a tongue in cheek theory that evolution stalled on the island of Great Britain. However on closer inspection this work takes a far more serious and melancholy position as we see the body of murdered Labour Party politician Jo Cox lying seemingly unnoticed as the masses complain about people 'coming over here, stealing our jobs'.

For more information or images please contact:

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Notes for Editors:

Workplace Gallery:

<http://www.workplacegallery.co.uk/>

WORKPLACE is a contemporary art gallery founded in Gateshead in the North of England in 2002, and with a gallery in Mayfair, London since 2013. Originally situated far from any of the UK's major cultural centres, the Gallery has worked intensely over the past decade to access the international artworld. With the objective of working with artists to achieve critical acclaim, WORKPLACE has become an important and integral part of the UK's cultural landscape through a respected programme of exhibitions, taking part in the leading international art fairs, and long-term partnerships with highly esteemed international artists and galleries. Growing out of an artist-led Northern English art scene, WORKPLACE aims to combine a progressive, countercultural spirit with an independent D.I.Y. attitude, connecting to a new generation of artists, collectors and curators worldwide.

WORKPLACE GATESHEAD opened in 2005 at 34 Ellison Street, Gateshead – part of Trinity Square Shopping Centre particularly noted for its iconic Brutalist car park which featured as a key location in the 1971 cult British gangster film 'Get Carter' starring Michael Caine. Since the complex was demolished in 2008, WORKPLACE Gateshead has been located at The Old Post Office in Gateshead – a 19th Century Grade 2 listed building built upon the site of the important 18th century British artist, engraver, and naturalist Thomas Bewick's studio and residence. Workplace Gateshead is supported by Arts Council England.

Robert McNally:

Robert McNally, born 1982 in Gateshead, UK, lives and works in Berlin.

Robert McNally received his BA in Drawing from Camberwell College of Art (2002-2005).

McNally has works in the collections of Museum Boijmans van Beuningen (NL) and Damien Hirst's Murderme collection (UK), Ekard Collection (NL), West Collection (USA), Sovereign Art Foundation (HK), Jake Chapman (UK), Dinos Chapman (UK), Olbricht Collection (DE).

Selected solo shows include *Artist of the Day*, Flowers Gallery, London, UK (2015); *Shyster, Chisler & Quack*, David Risley Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (2015); *One in the Other*, London, UK (2011)

Selected group exhibitions include *In the Pines – Slight Return*, David Risley Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (2017), *Washington 186*, Aeroplastics Contemporary, Brussels, BE (2017), *Prememories*, Aeroplastics Contemporary, Brussels, BE (2016); *Small is beautiful*, Flowers Gallery, London, UK (2015); *Between the Lines*, All Visual Arts, London, UK (2013); *Wonderful-Die Olbricht Collection*, Me Collectors Room, Berlin, DE (2012); *Extravagent, Shameless, Unlimited*, Museum Boijmas van Beuningen, Rotterdam, NL (2012); *Dessins Contemporains Surréalistes de Rotterdam*, Institut Néerlandais, Paris, FR (2012); *Return*, The House of the Nobleman, London, UK (2011)

Links:

<http://www.robertmcnally.co.uk/>

<http://www.davidrisleygallery.com/artists/robert-mcnally>

<http://www.aeroplastics.net/homepage-aeroplastics-44.html>

Press image captions:

Robert McNally

Blackeye Fridays 2016

Graphite on paper

55cm x 92cm

Courtesy of David Risley Gallery Copenhagen

Robert McNally

Inselaffen (alternative ending to the Bayeux tapestry No.1) 2017

Photogravure on Hahnemühle paper

56cm x 63cm (framed)

Edition 1 of 12 produced by Niels Borch Jensen Copenhagen