

Joel Kyack

Hold On Tightly / Let Go Lightly

24th November 2017 – 20th January 2018

Preview: 23 November 2017, 6-8 pm

WORKPLACE LONDON

61 Conduit Street, Mayfair

London, W1S 2GB

Thursday - Saturday, 10 – 6pm

Workplace Gallery is excited to present Joel Kyack's first solo exhibition at the Mayfair gallery. Following his successful debut UK exhibition at Workplace Gateshead in the North of England, *Hold On Tightly / Let Go Lightly* will be the LA based artist's first solo exhibition in London.

Through a series of works made in a range of different media including painting, sculpture, video and photography, the exhibition reflects upon the relationship between existence and the human condition collapsed into a non-linear narrative, where flowing connections over vast periods of time can be easily imagined.

A large scale abstract mobile constructed of primordial materials: sticks, stones and twine scavenged by the artist on his travels, takes over the space of the first gallery. Consisting predominantly of air, punctured by the linear and lumpen wood and stone forms that articulate the volume of the piece, it morphs and changes in relation to the viewer. Behind this, resting on two skulls in the corner of the room is a giant sketch-like painting rendered in the comic book style of "non-repro blue" of a primitive man in a lush forest, laughing gleefully and as he relieves himself into a small stream.

In the second gallery two large scale video screens mirror each other. Views upstream and downstream from the bottom of a shallow river hold the viewer in an endless limbo continuum. Ahead, a large scale photograph '*Portrait of the Artist as a Fountain*' depicts Kyack drinking an arc of liquid siphoned from the juice carton held high above his mouth, whilst simultaneously urinating into the concrete gutter of the LA river. Echoing the painting of the first room Kyack's self portrait is both action and performance in the direct lineage of contemporary art (after Duchamp and Nauman), but also connects to the history of classical painting. The exhibition functions as a contemporary allegory, with ancient yet familiar archetypes: time, chaos, plenty, folly re-interpreted by the artist and highlighting the perpetual dichotomy between our attempts at civilisation, and an inability to progress beyond our base actions and dark urges.

Joel Kyack was born in Born in 1972 in Pennsylvania, USA. He received his BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1995, studied at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 2004, and received his MFA from the University of Southern California in 2008. Recent solo projects include *The Very First Day* at Workplace Gateshead, *Old Sailors Never Die* and *Escape to Shit Mountain* at Francois Ghebaly, Los Angeles; *Point at the Thing That's Furthest Away* at Praz-Delavallade, Paris; *Superclogger*, a public project produced in collaboration with LA><ART and The Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and *The Knife Shop* at Kunsthalle - LA in Los Angeles. He is represented by Workplace Gallery in the UK, François Ghebaly in Los Angeles and Praz-Delavallade in Paris. Joel Kyack lives and works in Los Angeles, California