

Marcus Coates

The Last of Its Kind

9th February – 7th April 2018

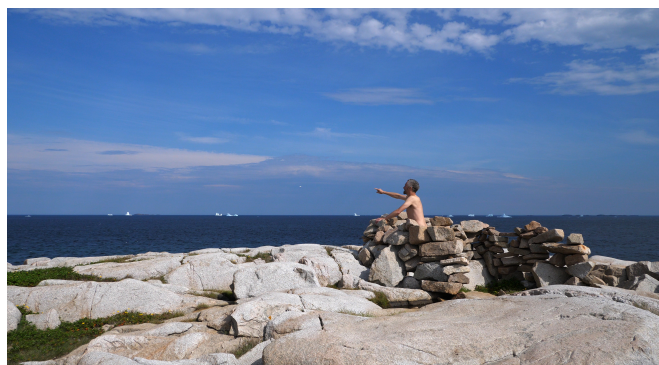
Preview: 8th February 2018, 6-8 pm

WORKPLACE GALLERY

61 Conduit Street, Mayfair

London, W1S 2GB

Thursday - Saturday, 10 – 6pm



"We promise you, the Great Auks, that we will do everything in our power to honour your once thriving existence here. We promise to do all we can to protect your kin, the other auks, birds and animals that we share our territories with, to maintain the diversity of conditions necessary for their survival. We will use the lessons of your extinction to educate our young and to promote respect for other species. We will do everything in our power to prevent the future extinctions of others."

(Apology to the Great Auk) Mayor of Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada, 2017

Workplace Gallery is pleased to present 'The Last of Its Kind' a solo exhibition by Marcus Coates at our Mayfair Gallery. Central to the exhibition are two new films produced in association with the Museum of the Flat Earth on Fogo Island in Newfoundland, Canada.

During the summer of 2017 Coates travelled to Fogo Island to ask for an official apology to be given the Great Auk, a flightless bird once numerous around the island, but extinct since 1844 due to excessive hunting. The resulting film *Apology to the Great Auk* documents a sincere attempt by the community of Fogo Island, through the specially appointed apology committee, to respond and learn from the loss of what can only now be imagined.

In 'The Last of Its Kind' also filmed in Newfoundland, Coates imagines himself as the very last human, seeking to convince the landscape surrounding him of the significance of human progress. Standing naked behind a rudimentary stone ruin on Fogo Island's shoreline, Coates repeatedly calls out a list of human achievements to the iceberg-laden ocean with increasing desperation. Bringing together the tragi-comic and the romantic sublime, the absurdity of Coates' desperate petitioning speaks to us through its stark contrast with the indifference of the natural surroundings and the relentlessness of time.

Both films act as cornerstones to a new body of work, brought together at the gallery for the first time, that explore our interconnection to other species, our impact upon their continued survival, and our relationship to our own extinction.

Marcus Coates was born in 1968 in London, UK. In 2008 he was the recipient of a Paul Hamlyn Award and in 2009 he won the Daiwa Art Prize. In 2013 Coates was shortlisted for the Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square artwork (2015/16). Recent exhibitions include: *The Land We Live In – The Land We Left Behind*, Hauser & Wirth Somerset; *As Above, So Below: Portals, Visions, Spirits & Mystics*, Irish Museum of Modern Art; *This Is A Voice*, Wellcome Collection, London; *The Trip*, Serpentine Gallery, London; *Private Utopia: Contemporary Art from the British Council Collection*, Tokyo Station Gallery, Japan; *Station to Station*, Barbican Art Centre, London; *Tate Triennial*, Tate Britain, London; MANIFESTA 7 and Venice Biennale. Coates lives and works in London.