

ERIC BAINBRIDGE

Potholes

24 November 2016 - 14 November 2017

WORKPLACE LONDON

Preview 23 November 2016

6 - 8pm



WORKPLACE is delighted to announce *Potholes*, an exhibition of drawings by British sculptor Eric Bainbridge encompassing works on paper from 1981 to the present day.

Initially recognized in the 1980s for his object-based works covered in synthetic fur, Eric Bainbridge (b.1955) has since evolved an extensive and varied sculptural practice. Constructed from inexpensive materials, and commonplace items, his often 'playful' pieces continuously re-contextualize Modernist principles and 'the found object'. Carefully staged, Bainbridge's assemblages investigate the domestic and the everyday whilst reflexively engaging with traditional sculptural concerns.

The exhibition at the Mayfair gallery, curated by George Vasey, presents preliminary sketches for potential sculptures, revealing Bainbridge's studio processes. The drawings, on gridded and lined paper as well as office stationery, illuminate many aspects of his sculptural work. Seen collectively, the drawings provide an insight into an artist tentatively working through his ideas.

Evidenced throughout Bainbridge's drawings are attempts to both engage and unsettle the sometimes macho and puritanical aspects of Modernist sculpture. By embracing the irregular, the absurd, and the cute as aesthetic strategies, the artist reinvigorates historical sculptural tropes with a wry humour. In characters such as 'Jimmy the Nail', a motif that Bainbridge has worked with since 1984, the artist conflates the formal tautology of his materials (the profile of a large nail) with a vernacular reference (the title invokes the famous Geordie singer and actor Jimmy Nail). The character pops up recursively in Bainbridge's drawings, and has become an emblem throughout his practice. 'Jimmy the Nail', like much of Bainbridge's work, moves between abstraction and anecdote, experimenting with the formal qualities of sculpture while simultaneously creating a biographical tone.

Potholes was first exhibited at The Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (NGCA) 30 January - 2 April 2016. The exhibition is accompanied by 'Eric Bainbridge Drawing Book', published by CIRCA Projects and co-edited by Adam Phillips. The book contains a text written by Vasey and a conversation between Rebecca Ackroyd and Athena Padouplos on Bainbridge's work.

Eric Bainbridge was born in Consett, County Durham, UK in 1955. He studied at Newcastle Polytechnic and completed a Masters in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art, London in 1981. Bainbridge has exhibited internationally since the early 80s, and his work has been included in many significant exhibitions across Europe, America and Asia. Previous exhibitions include the 1986 and 1990 Venice Biennale; *Material Culture* at the Hayward Gallery, London; *British Art of the 80's and 90's* at IMMA in Dublin; *Modern British Sculpture* at the Royal Academy, London. Solo exhibitions include *View Points* The Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis; *Eric Bainbridge* ICA, Boston; *Style, Space, Elegance*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; *Supercollage*, New Art Gallery Walsall; *Forward Thinking*, MIMA, Middlesbrough; and *Eric Bainbridge - Steel Sculptures* at Camden Art Centre. His work is in numerous international collections including the Stedelijk Collection, Arts Council England Collection, The Margulies Collection, and the Tate Collection. Bainbridge lives and works in Hartlepool and Sunderland, UK.

George Vasey is the curator at Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland and writer. Recent independently curated projects include 'Blend the Acclaim of Your Chant with the Timbrels' Jerwood Space, London, 'Breakin' Up is Hard to Do' KARST, Plymouth (co-curated with Ned McConnell) and 'Jo Spence & Alexis Hunter', Richard Saltoun, London. He is currently curating the exhibition 'These Rotten Words', due to open at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff in early 2017. His writing has been published in *Art Monthly*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Frieze*, *Art Review*, *Burlington* and *Apollo*.

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