

Press Release: January 2014

SPEAKING SPACE

If buildings were sentient...

6th March – 11th June 2014

Private View : Wednesday 5th March 2014, 6 – 8 pm

Collyer Bristow Gallery, 4 Bedford Row, Holborn, London WC1R 4TF

Kiera Bennett, Ruth Claxton, Ben Cove, Tod Hanson, Matthew Houlding, Mark Selby and James Smith. Curated by Day+Gluckman

We commonly associate architecture with a place that will ultimately house people. So what happens when people are removed from the equation and the architecture is allowed to develop its own unique identity? Perhaps the buildings, space and objects will mutate of their own accord, free of people and their neediness, with their own equivalent DNA. What fantastical imaginings might occur? Would some head towards a Pawson minimalist state or would Gaudi reign supreme?

Speaking Space was prompted by conversations with the artist Matthew Houlding, whose work is a glorious mash up of modernism meeting urban kitsch by way of a utopian dream. From large-scale sculptures housing Hawaiian shirts alongside found and constructed wooden and Perspex forms, the work is ultimately grounded in formal sculptural and architectural concerns. Its sheer exuberance lifts it beyond the arid aesthetic of everyday urban planning into a fantastical world of possibilities.

Tod Hanson's many commissions also utilise this free-thinking approach. A recent commission by Day + Gluckman for the Canal and River Trust's offices at Little Venice resulted in an extraordinary assimilation of colour and form, based on the maps, plans, systems and usage of the waterways by people and boats. For *Speaking Space* Hanson will create a unique wall



painting using and referencing Number 4 Bedford Row, itself a medley of architectural styles, from the Georgian exterior to the gallery space inside.

By placing objects within a space we are taught to read them as sculpture or furniture according to their predefined meanings. When the boundaries are blurred this intersecting moment takes on more significance. The sculptural works in the exhibition by Ruth Claxton, Mark Selby and Ben Cove all lean toward other playful elements. Claxton's nests are from a series, all housing a bird (or two), perched on a spiralling metal nest, looking like a Modernist house for sophisticated feathered fellows. Further painted homages by Kiera Bennett meld Modernism and Constructivism through witty reflections on these extraordinary movements, which continue to impact on art and architecture.

Speaking Space is an exhibition that allows us to imagine buildings as sentient beings. It is human nature to constantly refer back to our selves: children and adults alike can quickly begin to anthropomorphise buildings and their surroundings, assigning roles and picturing the consequences. James Smith's acute photographic observations of the on-going battle and occasional accord between the built and natural environment present an opportunity to see beyond the immediate.

The fun to be had imagining architectural form, function and devices, released from the constraints of practicalities and budgets, unleashing a new order on an unsuspecting audience is evidenced by the tactile joy inherent in all of the works.

Editors notes:

For more information on the artists or specific works in this exhibition please contact the curators:

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To visit the exhibition, please call reception at Collyer Bristow in advance:

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Collyer Bristow Gallery is a bespoke gallery space with a dynamic exhibition programme. Collyer Bristow LLP is a leading UK law firm with offices in London and Geneva. The firm provides business and personal legal advice to a wide range of clients both in the UK and internationally. Collyer Bristow has been championing emerging talent in contemporary art for nearly twenty years. www.collyerbristow.com

Day+Gluckman are Lucy Day and Eliza Gluckman. Both trained as artists, Day+Gluckman have been working together curating projects and exhibitions since 2006. From Museum-based exhibitions to collaborations with old master dealers, the duo has worked with over 200 artists in diverse environments. www.dayandgluckman.co.uk. Day+Gluckman aim to work directly with artists with rigorous and inspiring art practices to create thought provoking exhibitions of high quality and dialogue.

Image credit: Matthew Houlding, Poolside, 2012, Mixed media, 79.3 x 44.4 x 69.6 in. / 201.5 x 113 x 177 cm, Photo Anna Arca