

Michael E. Smith

1 October – 14 December 2019
Vyner Street, E2
Private view: Monday 30 September, 6-8pm

Modern Art is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by Michael E. Smith at its Vyner Street gallery. This is Smith's first solo exhibition with Modern Art.

Michael E. Smith's sculptures are made out of objects combed from the by-products of today's world. Sometimes these are nondescript things, for instance, a black sweatshirt and a fog machine, or a rusty bicycle frame and a used water pitcher. They appear as articles of disuse, retrieved from a wasteland. Other times, death itself is present in Smith's work, such as dried bones of animals, or taxidermy. Combined and arranged, Smith's sculptures become orators in a language that is difficult to pin to words. They operate instead through affective and lyrical registers, suggestive of political and social experiences that may be shared - ecological crisis, capitalist consumption and waste - as well as those that are not always shared – such as violence, death and social injustice.

Smith's work is often contextualised in reference to an economically depressed urban landscape. But his work is not allegorical, nor illustrative. Indeed, the qualities of poverty and vacancy with which his exhibitions are imbued recall such conditions, yet these attributes of Smith's work are as much in dialogue with the lineage of minimalism and conceptualism of the USA's 1960s and '70s. Educated at Yale in the class of Jessica Stockholder, Smith's work is at the same time a descendent of the sculptural approaches of appropriation and assemblage, as it is acutely sensitive to the semantic specificity of things: attending both to the affective potential of materiality and to the social value of objects – not as commodities, but as carriers of histories, as a means of communication.

Michael E. Smith was born in 1977 in Detroit, Michigan, and lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions including Kunsthalle Basel (2018); SMAK, Ghent (2017); Kunstverein Hannover, (2015); De Appel, Amsterdam (2015); Sculpture Center, New York (2015); La Triennale di Milano, Milan (2014); Power Station, Dallas (2014); CAPC musee d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, (2013) and Contemporary Art Museum, St Louis (2011). Smith's work has been included in group exhibitions at Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2017); David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2015); MoMA PS1, New York (2014); Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt (2014); and MOCA Cleveland, Cleveland, (2013). He participated in *May You Live in Interesting Times*, Venice Biennale 2019, the 2018 Baltic Triennial and the 2012 Whitney Biennial.

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