

Steven Claydon

*Rat. Pearl. London. Onion:*29 November 2012 – 26 January 2013
4 New Burlington Place, London W1

Steven Claydon's first exhibition with Sadie Coles HQ revolves around the transmission of matter and information, and the mediating effect of hindsight. Harnessing sculpture, painting and video, Claydon reinterprets the vehicles – objects, images, texts – via which cultural baggage has been communicated. He explores how an object's social status or agency is offset by its essential materiality or "thingly" agency.

The genesis of the show was a small book on Breughel published by Dolphin, a branch of Thames & Hudson, in the 1970s. Its dual status as a social object (with distinctive sans serif font and compressed layout) and a repository of relayed information mirrors the exhibition's wider preoccupation with artefacts and their shifting meanings and statuses. Replicas of antique musical instruments – the precursors to more familiar instruments played today – are a recurring point of reference.



Several sculptures draw together eclectic aesthetics and materials as well as combining traditional and high-tech modes of facture, in order to articulate the ways in which information is compartmentalised and metered. A Formica-coated cube bears a decorative panel (quoting Tudor décor yet cast deceptively in polyurethane foam). A marbled circular relief refers elliptically to the boiling sentient sea in Stanislaw Lem's book *Solaris*, whose "sticky, colloidal mass" could be a metaphor for the metamorphosing associations which populate Claydon's work. The plinth of one assemblage incorporates a structure resembling carved limewood, while its overall form references a design by the feted architect Ettore Sottsass. This modernist paradigm clothed in Gothic ornament problematises familiar methods of layout and compilation, compounding them to create a 'beacon' of accreted information. On top is a duo of fetish-like figures, each modelled on a carving of an Augustinian abbot. Truncated and doubled, they begin to resemble 'primitive' ethnic carvings – a slippage in signification which mirrors the infidelity of the materials themselves. A plaster bucket stuffed with incongruous utilitarian items refers to a wicker basket in Breughel's painting *Children's Games* (1560) similarly packed with motley objects.

A video installation titled *A Broken Consort* juxtaposes footage based on an animated screensaver with excerpts from a 1976 Granada television documentary written and presented by musician and musical historian David Munrow. The documentary aimed to introduce Medieval and early Renaissance instruments to a popular audience. Much of it speculated on the composition and construction of early music and instruments on the basis of extant examples and fragments of ancient scores. Installed nearby, *Orion Prepared Spinnet* is a *bricolage* compilation of objects whose structure is based on a hollow English Bentside Spinnet (a type of harpsichord). Another sculpture incorporates replicas of the reed instruments discussed in the documentary – all the while expressing the impossibility of faithful 'recreation' or 'reconstruction' (Claydon's instruments are deliberately functionless) and the lack of veracity which memory entails. These instruments were predominantly monophonic devices (sounding a single note), and Claydon has incorporated an electronic soundtrack into the film composed on a monophonic analogue synthesizer.

Mirroring the virtual collations of search engines, Claydon's works compress a mass of allusions. They intimate canons and taxonomies while ultimately deconstructing such systems. Claydon thereby activates the contingent nature of reference itself and accentuates the mutating "voicefulness" of objects. He has commented that objects are "performative and active post authorship ... these things should operate without any knowledge of my motives or research: objects conceal and reveal constantly." His work ultimately questions whether the concept of reconstructing objects from the past might be inverted, so that the artefacts of the future – or of alternative realities – can be 'pre-constructed'.

Steven Claydon (b. 1969) studied at Chelsea School of Art & Design and Central Saint Martins, London. He has exhibited internationally, with major solo exhibitions including *Culpable Earth* at firstsite, Colchester (2012); *Mon Plaisir...Votre Travail...*, La Salle de Bains, Lyon, France (2011); *Goldene Zeiten / Golden Times*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2010); *The Ancient Set and The Fictional Pixel*, Serpentine Pavilion, London, and *The Ancient Set*, International Project Space, Bournville, Birmingham (2008); and *Courtesy Of The Neighbourhood Watch*, White Columns, New York (2006). Performances include *An Equivalence Propelled*, Royal William Dockyard, Plymouth, 17 September 2011, and *Forward-facing lemon yellow eyes*, Hayward Gallery, London, 31 March 2011 (both in conjunction with *British Art Show 7*); *Bestiary*, Cavallerizza Reale, Turin, July 2009; and Serpentine Pavilion, London, 08 August 2008. His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including *SOUNDWORKS*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London (2012); *Various Stages – Bedingte Bühnen*, Kunsthaus Dresden, Germany (2012); *We Will Live, We Will See*, The Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2011); and *British Art Show 7: In the Days of the Comet*, Nottingham, London, Glasgow and Plymouth (2010-11). In 2007 he curated the exhibition *Strange Events Permit Themselves The Luxury of Occurring* at Camden Arts Centre. A major publication, *Culpable Earth*, was produced to coincide with firstsite's show in 2012.

For further information please contact James Cahill on +44 [0] 20 7493 8611 or james@sadiecoles.com

Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 11 – 6pm

www.sadiecoles.com

69 South Audley Street London W1K 2QZ
4 New Burlington Place London W1S 2HS
T +44 [0] 20 7493 8611 F +44 [0] 20 7499 4878

Reg in England no 3211376
Vat no 690 6671 06

Steven Claydon

- 1969 Born in London
Lives and works in London
- 1997 MA Fine Art, Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design, London
- 1991 BA Fine Art: Painting, Chelsea School of Art & Design, London

Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 *Rat. Pearl. London. Onion.*, Sadie Coles, London
Culpable Earth, Firstsite, Colchester, UK
- 2011 *Twickenham Garden*, Kimmerich Gallery, New York (NY)
Mon Plaisir... Votre Travail..., La Salle de Bains, Lyon, France
- 2010 *Trom Bell To The Bow Draps*, Hotel, London
Golden Times, Haus der Junst, Munich, Germany
- 2009 David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles (CA), USA
The Ground is Good, Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich, Germany
Two Times New Horizon, Galleria Massimo de Carlo, Milan, Italy
- 2008 *The Ancient Set and The Fictional Pixel*, Film Installations and Performance,
Serpentine Pavillion, London
Osram and Omar, Hotel, London
The Ancient Set, International Project Space, Bournville, Birmingham, UK
A & not A, Galerie Dennis Kimmerich, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2007 *New Valkonia*, David Kordansky, Los Angeles (CA), USA
- 2006 *Courtesy Of The Neighbourhood Watch*, White Columns, New York (NY), USA
- 2005 *All Across the Thready Eye*, Galerie Dennis Kimmerich, Düsseldorf, Germany
Fear of a Planet, Hotel, London
- 2004 *The Third of the Third*, Hoxton Distillery, London

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2013 *Transmitter / Receiver: The persistence of collage from the Arts Council Collection*,
Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle, Cumbria, UK
- 2012 *Unlimited Bodies / Corps Sans Limites*, Palais d'Iéna, Siège du Conseil économique, social
et environnemental, Paris
SOUNDWORKS, Institute of Contemporary Art, London
In the Space of the Beholder, Contemporary Sculpture from the Sammlung Moderne Kunst,
Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany
*IN RAUM DES BETRACHTERS: Skulptur der Gegenwart aus der Sammlung Moderne
Kunst*, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany
Various Stages – Bedingte Bühnen, Kunsthaus Dresden, Germany
'This This Monster This Things', Focal Point Gallery, Southend Central Library, Southend-
on-Sea, UK
Transmitter / Receiver: The persistence of collage from the Arts Council Collection,

- The New Art Gallery Walsall, UK; Usher Gallery, Lincoln, UK
The Dan Cox Library for the Unfinished Concept of Thingly Time, Cubitt, London
- 2011 *CLASSICS*, Carlson, London
The Keno Twins 5, Barriera, Turin, Italy
The Profane Myth, The Literary & Philosophical Society and The Mining Institute, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
The Strawberry Thief, curated by Jeremy Deller, The Fine Art Society, London
Transmitter / Receiver: The persistence of collage from the Arts Council Collection, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, UK
Something in the Way, LIAF 2011, Kabelvag, Norway
We Will Live, We Will See, The Zabłudowicz Collection, London
Secret Societies. To Know, To Dare, To Will, To Keep Silence, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Frankfurt, DE; CAPC de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France
Time Again, Sculpture Center, Long Island City (NY), USA
Savage Messiah, Rob Tufnell, London, UK
British Art Show 7: In the Days of the Comet, Hayward Gallery, London; Glasgow, UK; Plymouth, UK
- 2010 *Alexandra Bircken, Carol Bove, Steven Claydon*, Kimmerich, New York (NY), USA
Rive Gauche/Rive Droite, organized by Marc Jancou, Paris
At Home/Not at Home: Works from the Collection of Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson (NY), USA
Goldene Zeiten, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany
- 2009 *Newspeak: British Art Now*, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia
The Dark Monarch, Tate St.Ives, Cornwall, UK
Dune, The Drawing Room, London
Le Sang d'un poète, Sant-Nazaire Biennale, Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France
Remote Memories, Kai10, Düsseldorf, Germany, curated by Zdenek Felix
- 2008 *Novel*, Bibliothekswohnung Anna-Catherina Gebbers, Berlin
Homage to Modern Art, Galleria Massimo de Carlo, Milan, Italy
The Ancient Set, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, London
 Busan Biennial, Busan, South Korea
In Geneva No One Can Hear You Scream, Blondeau Fine Art Services, Geneva, Switzerland
Heroes and Villians, Marc Jancou Contemporary, New York (NY), USA
- 2007 *Strange Events Permit Themselves the Luxury of Occurring*, Camden Arts Centre, London, UK curated by Steven Claydon
Nueva Dimension, Hats Plus, London, organised by Dick Evans
Effigies, Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London
Old School, Hauser and Wirth Colnaghi, London; Zwirner and Wirth, New York (NY)
Sympathy For The Devil, Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967, Museum Of Contemporary Art, Chicago (IL), USA, curated by Dominic Molon
 Galerie Rüdiger Shcöttle, Munich, Germany

- Come Into The Open*, Projekt 0047, Oslo, Norway
Pale Carnage, Arnolfini, Bristol, UK; Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, UK
Gallery Swap, Hotel at Guido Baudach, Berlin
- 2006 *The Metal Bridge*, Sorcha Dallas, Glasgow, UK
Deep Into That Darkness Peering, Galerie Kamm, Berlin
Rings of Saturn, Tate Modern, London, curated by Emma Dexter
Dereconstruction, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York (NY), curated by Matthew Higgs
Keep Passing The Open Windows Or Happiness, Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne, Germany
Writing the Strobe, Dicksmith Gallery, London, curated by Andrew Hunt
- 2005 *Time Lines*, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany
Flies Around the Fury Flotsam, Curators Space, London
- 2005 *Odiseado Tra Tempo*, Peter Kilchmann Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland, curated by Charlotte Mailler
Paris – Londres: Le Voyage Interieur, Espace Electra, Paris, curated by Alex Farquharson
Even a Stopped Clock Tells the Right Time Twice a Day, ICA, London
Post no Bills, White Columns, New York (NY)
Clouds of Witness, Islington Town Hall, London
From Earth, Light Box, Tate Britain, London
- 2004 *The Last Supper*, Hoxton Distillery, London
The Poster, The Show 1,2,3..., Hoxton Distillery, London
- 2003 *Nibs.*, Hoxton Distillery, London, curated by Steven Claydon
The Sum of the Earth, Hoxton Distillery, London
- 2001 *It Grows Away*, collaboration with Neil Chapman, The Hoxton Distillery, London
Loud Like Nature, ADD N TO (X), La Box, Borges, France
- 2000 *Five works in lieu of a particle accelerator*, Greengrassi, London
- 1999 *ADDING N TO (X)*, Villa Noailles, Hyeres, France
- 1998 *Shrimp-Ice Briefing*, with Neil Chapman, ICA, London
Its A Curse Its A Burden, Approach Gallery, London, curated by Glenn Brown
- 1997 *Peripheral Visionary*, Eindhoven, NL, curated by Colin Lowe and Roddy Thompson

Public Collections

Tate Gallery, London

Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany