

## ***A Few Things That I Know from Them***

**Exhibition from 24 October 2013 to 21 December 2013**

**Opening reception Thursday 24 October, 6pm-10pm**

*A Few Things That I Know from Them*, brings together four internationally renowned artists, each making an anti-establishment statement using devices relating to memory. Braco Dimitrijevic introduces viewers to the exhibition by challenging the truth of historical discourse, while Hamish Fulton, Ai Weiwei and Zhao Zhao enter into dialogue through works that reveal their singular positions with regard to the Chinese government's policy of repression.

The selection of photographs by Braco Dimitrijevic - from the series *This Could be a Place of Historical Interest* (1972-1975) - presents the facades of buildings on the streets of New York and London. Through these images, the artist makes the suggestion that ordinary places can become places of *historical interest*. Asserting his intention to inaugurate a *post-historical* era, Braco Dimitrijevic creates monuments that break their own rules. The very notions of memorial commemoration and historical reality are thus emptied of meaning. Braco Dimitrijevic's message endorses a form of relativism when it comes to the authority of history, which is presented as a fictional tale.

Following the same premise, we view historical discourse as a fiction; the works of Hamish Fulton, Ai Weiwei and Zhao Zhao seem like residues of an imaginary past. Substituting for the established notion of the monument are those of the trace, the remainder, or even the relic. The exhibition *A Few Things That I Know from Them* is a way of revealing the *historical fiction* of past events.

In spring 2011 in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, Hamish Fulton performed a walk in support of Ai Weiwei, who was at that time incarcerated in a Chinese prison. Through this performance, the artist was taking part in the international mobilisation and reaffirming his critical stance with regard to the Chinese government's affronts to freedom. The mural painting presented here testifies to this same engagement, in reference to Fulton's participation in a pro-Tibet demonstration in the streets of London. *Tibetan Protest* (2009-2013) also evokes the artist's meeting with Palden Gyatso, a Buddhist monk and leader the Tibetan uprising who was imprisoned for over thirty years.

Ai Weiwei is introduced into the exhibition through the presence of two of the *1001 Wooden Chairs* presented at documenta 12 in 2007. The number of chairs corresponded to the 1001 Chinese citizens invited to spend 28 days in Kassel for the exhibition. Thus the *Fairytale* operation subversively brought Chinese culture face-to-face with the contemporary Western socioeconomic context. A victim of the surveillance that has been showering down on him in recent years, Ai Weiwei is now struggling to express himself freely in his own country. The exhibition of these chairs at TORRI gallery can be viewed as a commemoration of one of the founding gestures of his practice.

Having worked for seven years as an assistant to Ai Weiwei, Zhao Zhao (born 1982) has become known for his subversive artistic practice. Following a road accident in 2005, he chose to keep his car's broken windshield. A few years later, in 2007, Zhao Zhao acquired a firearm on a Chinese website. Inspired by these two experiences, *Constellation XVII* (2013) is composed of a plate of glass sprinkled with bullet holes. It is the artist's record of having broken the law by acquiring and using a firearm.

The memory traces that constitute these pieces of art enter into dialogue in the gallery's space in the form of fictional histories. These testimony-works attesting to past activism reach us as art objects via the detour of a subversive conception of history initiated by Braco Dimitrijevic in the early 1970s.