

# LISSON GALLERY

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## Press Release

Ryan Gander

*The Self Righting of All Things*

2 March – 21 April 2018

67 Lisson Street, London

Ryan Gander's sixth exhibition with Lisson Gallery draws on notions of time and its passage. With a philosophical overture and a sharp existential focus, the exhibition illustrates the innate ability of all things, in both physics and the wider human context, to naturally self-right themselves. Drawing on the simple yet profound advice given by his father – "Let the world take a turn" – Gander encourages the viewer to sit back and watch, to observe, and allow for a natural course of action, as time has power: to heal, transform, shift perceptions and elicit change. Rather than trying to control time, to stop it or to change it, Gander embraces a more *laisse faire* attitude. Things change as the world changes, while everything stays the same, and if we are open to this approach, we can see the world, and our place in it, in a more honest and empathetic light.

A cube made entirely of flip-dot panels, like those formerly found in public transportation timetables, hangs from the front ceiling of 67 Lisson Street. Analogous to a massive clock, the large-scale installation measures time in an abstract way, showing its passage both audibly and visibly. Different tears of coloured dots rain down each panel, programmed according to an algorithm set by the artist. The clicking sound of the dots is accompanied by Gander's voice, telling autobiographic stories that are at once humorous and melancholic. Each story hints at the destruction that surrounds us, shadowed by an overarching sense of anxiety and loss, although not without a touch of the artist's usual hope and playfulness. The texts, which include a series of poems and essays, will be transcribed on the back of a poster, with the quote by Gander's father on the front, the first 100 of which will be given away through a social media competition announced on the artist's Instagram page (@ryanjgander).

Gander activates the gallery completely by the passage of time, with the entire front spaces turned into a giant architectural hourglass, fully visible from the façade of the building off 52 Bell Street. At the start of the exhibition, the top half of the gallery will be filled with black sand, cascading down to the ground floor below. As the sand trickles through the floor, it reveals a series of stone sculptures – mythological nymphs like those found in classical Victorian paintings, rendered in 3D with precise replications of figurative poses, albeit removed from their original context and altered by their new surroundings – all the while slowly covering up the sculptural realisation of a Gömböc on the ground floor. An ancient problem first conjectured by Russian mathematician Vladimir Arnold and later proved by the Hungarian scientist Gábor Domokos, these convex objects have countless varieties but hold in common a simple mathematical equation: when resting on a flat surface, each Gömböc has one stable and one unstable point of equilibrium, adjusting to find balance in its own instability. From a mathematical point of view, the Gömböc can be regarded as the origin of all shapes: all other form types can be evolved from the Gömböc by a man-made algorithm. From the point of view of natural philosophy, as well as a broader sociological perspective, an opposing interpretation emerges: the Gömböc represents the ultimate though unattainable goal of shape evolution in the non-living world. It represents both the starting point of life and the deterioration of all things. Here one can see and experience the moment of time elapsing. The presence of the Gömböc in the context of Gander's installation alludes to both the search for balance in a mathematical sense but also for the redress of imbalance and mass inequality on a global scale.

The relationship between Gömböcs and spheres is further explored in an oversized snow globe, nearly one metre in diameter, in constant motion with blurred visibility – a snow globe that never stops snowing. Snowfall itself is a temporal marker, a more evanescent sand of time: one wants to know when it will stop snowing and how long it will last before it melts into spring. The work relates to Gander's participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Biennale of Sydney (16 March – 11 June), where he will turn the UNESCO heritage prison Cockatoo Island into a giant, walk-in snow globe. The globe at Lisson will be presented next to a chair designed in the 1920s by Marcel Breuer, flipped on its side, seemingly discarded and removed of any function, with several inches of snowfall cast in marble resin moulded on top.

A new font, titled 'Set in Stone' and available to download for free at <http://setinstonetypeface.co.uk/>, will feature throughout the exhibition. Gander and his daughter often collect stones from a nearby beach in Suffolk, and as part of a lesson in semiotics, they created a new Roman alphabet from the stones and turned it into a typeface. The stones themselves are significant in that amongst the millions of them found on any beach, there is an infinite probability that they exist as Gömböcs. A copy of 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' rendered with this font will be available from the desk at reception.

### **About Ryan Gander**

Ryan Gander's complex and unfettered conceptual practice is stimulated by queries, investigations or what-ifs, rather than strict rules or limits. For example, what if a child's den of sheets were remade in memorialising marble (*Tell My Mother not to Worry (ii)*, 2012)? What if all the pieces in a chess set were remade in Zebra Wood, so that neither side was entirely black nor white (*Bauhaus Revisited*, 2003)? Gander is a cultural magpie in the widest sense, polymathically taking popular notions apart only to rebuild them in new ways – perhaps by refilming the same ten-second clip 50 times over, as in *Man on a Bridge (A study of David Lange)*, 2008. Language and storytelling play an overarching role in his work, not least in his series of *Loose Association* lectures or in his attempt to slip a nonsensical, palindromic new word, 'mitim', into the English language. Occasionally his ludic concepts drift into more bodily, relational challenges, especially in *This Consequence* of 2006, that involved the unsettling presence of a gallery owner or invigilator dressed in an all-white Adidas tracksuit, with an additional sinister red stain embroidered into the fabric. Invitation and collaboration are also at the heart of Gander's fugitive art – whether he's exchanging fictionalised newspaper obituaries with an artist-friend or taking pictures of people looking at pictures at an art fair – although arguably every solipsistic action he takes merely holds up yet another mirror to his ceaselessly voracious mind.

Ryan Gander, born in Chester in 1976, lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions have been staged at the new Remai Modern, Saskatoon, Canada (2017); National Museum of Osaka, Osaka, Japan (2017); Cc Foundation, Shanghai, China (2017); Scrapmetal, Toronto, Canada (2016); MAC, Montreal, Canada (2016); Aspen Art Museum, CO, USA (2015); Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada (2015); Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia (2015); Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore (2015); Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City, Mexico (2015); OK Centre for Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria (2015) touring to Centre for Contemporary Art, Derry, Ireland (2014) and FRAC Île-de-France / Le Plateau, France (2013); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2012); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico (2012); Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland (2010); Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA (2010); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2008); the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2007 & 2003); MUMOK, Vienna, Austria (2007) and the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA, USA (2007). He has also shown in group exhibitions such as the Shanghai Biennale, China (2012); documenta 13, Kassel, Germany (2012); ILLUMInations, 54th Venice Biennale, Italy (2011); 55th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, USA (2008) and the Sydney Biennial, Australia (2008 and 2018). Ryan Gander has been awarded numerous prestigious prizes, among them the Zürich Art Prize (2009), the ABN Amro Art Prize (2006), the Baloise Art Statements of the Art Basel (2006) and the Dutch Prix de Rome for sculpture (2003).

### **About Lisson Gallery**

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 58 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. In its second decade the gallery introduced

significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie, to the public for the first time. In addition to a number of renowned artist estates, including Roy Colmer, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation, the gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller and Tatsuo Miyajima. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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