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Esther Schipper
Simon Fujiwara Empathy I
Opening: Friday 31 August 2018, 2-9pm
Potsdamer Strasse 81E, 10785 Berlin www.esterschipper.com



Esther Schipper is pleased to announce Simon Fujiwara's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The artist, who joined the gallery in January 2018, will present a new large-scale installation, which will feature an immersive simulator experience.

Empathy I was inspired by the artists' experiences of several sites of popular leisure, from mass historical tourist attractions such as Neuschwanstein Castle to theme parks such as Disneyland Paris. Closely collaborating with a company that produces theme park rides, Fujiwara began to develop his own immersive simulator experience that, rather than dealing with fantasy or historical experiences, brings the viewers into the 'real world' by simulating found footage and first person perspective camerawork. Fujiwara's simulator ride not only physically mimics the gestures of the various people's experiences in the film, but also suggests a physical connection between the images on the screen and the audience's own bodies through the synchronization of the motion platform seating.

Fujiwara's point of departure for this work was his interest in the accelerated dynamics of today's production and consumption of images and the increasing fetishization of the individual experience and in an age of mass social media. In **Empathy I**, Fujiwara radically shifts the focus from the image to the body, describing the work as a 'sculptural experience' rather than a film. Experienced in an intimate setting—the work can only be viewed by two visitors at a time—**Empathy I** translates and augments a range of the experiences of others—from the tragic, ecstatic to the banal—into one's own physical

experience. As such, the duration of the work is a function of the human body's biological constraints, and its content selected according to the brain's ability to register meaning under such intense simulated physical conditions. In this sense the images evoke the primary bodily experience of danger, stillness and speed, sadness and pleasure.

In a socio-technological climate where the individual is increasingly prized over group or mass identification, **Empathy I** reflects on an increasingly simulated world which is at once thrillingly emotive and disturbingly efficient.

Over the past decade, Fujiwara (born 1982 in London, lives and works in Berlin) has become known for his staging of large, complex exhibitions that explore the deeply rooted mechanisms of identity construction for both individuals and societies. Addressing the inherent contradictions of image and narrative making – from social media and self-presentation to marketing and history formation – Fujiwara revels in the complexity and paradox of our simultaneous quest for fantasy and authenticity. Crossing multiple media, from sculpture and installation to video and painting and mining worlds as diverse as advertising and archaeology, Fujiwara's works are a constant reportage on the real-world sources from which they draw inspiration. However, rather than simply presenting commentary, the artist creates a unique universe of his own – one that is populated with challenging and often absurd new narratives that are as intellectually rigorous as they are emotionally stimulating.

The catalogue of Fujiwara's major solo presentation at the Kunsthaus Bregenz, Hope House, is forthcoming in August. The book features essays by Joshua Simon, Thomas D. Trummer and Norman Rosenthal and complete documentation of the exhibition which included a full-scale replica of the Anne Frank House Museum reconstructed within the Kunsthaus Bregenz that took its inspiration from a "build your own" model of the Anne Frank House Museum and a comprehensive overview of recent work.

On October 12, 2018 Fujiwara's solo presentation at Lafayette Anticipations opens in Paris.

Press:

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