

Kate MacGarry

BEN RIVERS

« **Phantoms of a Libertine** »

21 April - 26 May 2012

Kate MacGarry is pleased to announce Ben Rivers' second exhibition in the gallery, featuring a new 10 minute, 16mm film and a series of black and white photographs.

Glamorous destinations are hand-scrawled in ink beside black and white photographs: Acapulco, Haifa, Marseille, New York. Fragments of fading figures are taped to the yellowing pages of the album. This was a life documented and remembered, but the man who made the album departed a year ago. Now his flat sits silent and heavy, crammed with animistic artefacts, books, collages of broken stone figures, collected and created over decades spent travelling the world for Time & Life Magazine. The photo albums are fragile and threaten to fall apart, the talismans are removed from their intended rituals, the dust is more dominant, more all-consuming, than the sense of a living present. Since the departure of its occupant, the flat has become a museum, rather than a mausoleum, a shrine to what has past.

Ben Rivers was a friend of the anonymous subject of this brand new body of work, which transforms tokens of experience into a series of clues to a mystery that must remain unsolved. History is made by how it is classified, organized, and recorded; here the artist assumes control over what Michel Foucault deemed "the order of things." Inspired partly by Marcel Broadthaers' *Voyage On The North Sea* (1974), Rivers uses 16mm film to archive the found-imagery of an elusive biography. While Rivers' recent work has focused on individuals and communities within hermetic or utopian worlds, here he revisits themes of his earlier works, such as *House* (2005/7), which illuminate the power of deserted space. Neither morbid nor sentimental, Rivers' narrative flickers into view and then disperses, as thick and opaque as the clouds of dust that fill the atmosphere of the empty flat. Both cryptic and startling, combining fictional elements with documentary content, focusing on the detail rather than the panorama of a life, the film, photos and objects are an exploration into what is left behind.

BEN RIVERS born Somerset 1972, lives and works in London.

Rivers will have a solo exhibition at Hamburger Kunsthalle in May 2012. *Slow Action* is currently showing at Hepworth Wakefield until 10 June, *Two Years at Sea* was screened at MOMA New York in January this year, it was also part of the London Film Festival and Venice Film Festival in 2011. In the same year *Sack Barrow* was shown at the Changing Room in Stirling, Project Space at The Hayward Gallery and Art Basel where it won the Baloise Prize. Previously *Slow Action* was shown at Matt's Gallery in London and at Picture This in Bristol. *Origin of the Species* was Ben Rivers' first solo exhibition at Kate MacGarry, London in 2010.