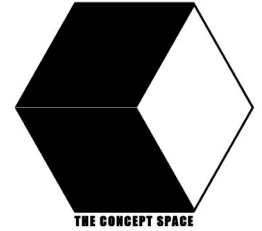


## PRESS RELEASE



### **B e n j a m i n   D e a k i n**

Seeking News From Nowhere

23 March - 21 April 2018

The Concept Space is pleased to present 'Seeking News From Nowhere' an exhibition of works by British artist Benjamin Deakin. Exploring the notion that the search for a utopian environment is possibly a dystopian one in itself, the artist uses the deconstruction and reconstruction of our depth perception within a space in his paintings to suggest this.

Deakin's work with its complex composition and blend of environments laced with architectural sensibilities places the viewer on a threshold. This is the main interest of his practice and here lies the contradiction in the quest for the idealised utopia. There is a reference to the work of the nineteenth century English architect, poet and writer William Morris' novel 'News From Nowhere' in the research for the paintings. Exploring the hybrid of the built / artificially constructed and the natural environment at the very intersection which they collide or rather fuse. The suggestion of nature's struggle and turn against the humanly constructed environment or even its reclamation through ruins is avoided. We are presented with the point at which there is a momentary equal partnership - hybrid, threshold and land of nowhere. This intersection between the urban and the natural is highlighted with Deakin's signature dissolving effect. It is the re-imagining of a utopia of ruins rather than the expected dystopian viewscape.

The technique and tonal sensibility employed in these works serves to draw in the viewer with a palette of pastel tones, mellow, soft and soothing hues that conjure up a sense of near-neutral yet heightened Romanticism of nineteenth century traditional landscape paintings. Even with observations and investigation into the so-called 'edgelands' of abandoned railways, industrial scrubland or retail parks, Deakin attempts to dissolve these in his painting by creating spaces with a sense of vulnerability.

In the painting 'Navigator' we witness the state of an artificial giant cube juxtaposed against natural rocky surfaces as that very volume dissolves through a secondary plane creating an oscillation in the perceived distance and depth. These conflicting vanishing points lend themselves to Deakin's continued exploration of thresholds. On the other hand, in 'Multiplier' the perception of distance constantly shifts through the destabilisation of the flat illusionary surface. The entire environment seem to be dissolving into a single matter as the interior wasteland ruin merges with the external natural environment. Nature providing the draping melting curtains over the artificial man-made intervention of brick walls. This paradox is a consistent strand in Deakin's paintings. As seen in previous series where mountain scenes reminiscent of nineteenth century paintings of Yosemite National Park or the Rocky mountains were juxtaposed against debris and gravel piles of the Canadian gold-mines that the artist observed first hand.

Overall, these pictures of hybrid spaces seem to suggest that what is perceived as reality is only a projection of our imagination, alluding to the fact that the quest for Utopia is one that can probably never be realised.

One might experience and interpret these paintings as having a sense of fairytale and a grand theatrical staging, an environment anticipating a narrative based on William Morris' idealised land of nowhere (a fantasy, perhaps?).

## PRESS RELEASE ENDS

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### ABOUT BENJAMIN DEAKIN

Benjamin Deakin (b.1977) lives and works in London. He studied for a BA Honours in Fine Art Painting at Kingston University, UK from 1998-2001 and MA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London, UK from 2005 to 2006.

He paints fictional hybrid spaces using a range of stylistic and historical references with an interest in the way in which different cultures interact with their native landscapes and how certain places take on cultural associations as well as political and economic significance. In Deakin's paintings this is expressed in densely layered surfaces in which architectural traces suggest ruination and geometric interventions that disrupt and bisect the composition and organic forms. Key to his practice are his experiences from various travels to remote parts of the world. On one such trip in 2013 he spent three months cycling through the Andes visiting ancient Inca and Wari ruins.

Selected notable exhibitions include:

We are Building a New World: Studio 1.1, London, UK (2017); Making the Nature Seen: Tannery Projects, London, UK (2016); Screen: Turps Gallery, London, UK (2015); Hundreds and Thousands, Lubomirov-Angus Hughes Gallery, London, UK (2015); Mid-summer Night, Listhus, Olafsfjordur, Iceland (2015); This Year's Model: Studio1.1, London, UK (2015); ZAP Open: Zeitgeist Arts Projects, London, UK (2014); Tan Lines, Tannary Arts, London, UK (2014); Disclosure, Chart Gallery, London, UK (2014); Summer Saloon Show, Lion and Lamb Gallery, London, UK (2013); Drawing Biennial, Drawing Room, London, UK (2013); Working on the Inside II, Tannery Arts Space, London, UK (2013); Marmite Prize for Painting, Nationally touring exhibition (2012); Parallels of Latitude, UBM Head Office, London, UK (2012); Working on the Inside, Tannery Arts Space, London, UK (2012); Need and Desire, Blue Fin Building, London, UK (2011); Off the Clock, 92Y Tribeca Gallery, New York, USA, (2010); Off the Clock, The Mile End Art Pavilion, London, UK, (2010); Salon 10, Matt Roberts Arts, Vyner Street, London, UK

### AWARDS / RESIDENCIES

Artists residency Joya Art+Ecologica, Andalucia, Spain; (2017); Artists residency at Listhus, Olafsfjordur, Iceland (2015); Residency KIAC, Dawn City, Yukon, Canada (2008); Residency at The University of Kathmandu, Nepal (2005); The Slade/West Dean

### ABOUT THE CONCEPT SPACE

The Concept Space is a unique contemporary art hub in Bermondsey, London founded as a bridging platform for artists, curators and collectors to express their passion for contemporary art with program of exhibitions, projects, talks, residencies and collaborations with freedom and flexibility for a parallel program. Located in an area gaining a reputation as London's latest art hub with spaces such as Jerwood Space, White Cube, Arthouse1, Drawing Room, Art Bermondsey Project Space and Vitrine to name a few, it aims to present works by both UK and other international artists.

The Concept Space is open Tuesday to Saturday, 12pm-6pm. Closed Sunday and Monday  
7 Spa Road, Bermondsey, London, SE16 3QP

[www.theconceptspace.org](http://www.theconceptspace.org)

### SOCIAL MEDIA

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#SeekingNewsFromNowhere

#BenjaminDeakin

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