

WORKS|PROJECTS

PRESS RELEASE

Matt Stokes

Voice | Hand | Hammer | Fire

18th September – 23rd October 2010

Matt Stokes constructs investigations into alternative movements and informal social groupings that often bind together audiences from disparate or unexpected backgrounds. Music subcultures have been central to the development of his recent projects, which have focused on their ability to shape lifestyle, beliefs, and create collective identity. Stokes' works begin with research and a process of immersing himself into the social structures of the scene he is working with, which result in films, installations and event-based works that hold collaboration and shared authorship at the centre of both their structure and philosophy.

For *Independent State*, produced by Foreground in Frome, Somerset last summer, Stokes was commissioned to create a work that would be made directly with members of the local community to be inserted into the town's Carnival. Stokes worked with the thriving local punk/hardcore music scene to conceive of a sculpture which would pay homage to the energy and self-image of a genre that might be thought of as a surprising cultural output for a small Somerset town. To realize the ideas of the fans and bands Stokes identified a distinctly separate group with which to collaborate. He recruited local blacksmiths and metalworkers to actualise the idiosyncratic design - an organic growth of conjoined icosahedrons welded from steel-plate, and bound together with steel rope forged by the blacksmiths and artist. The work was initiated during a weekend-long Forge-in Festival at which visitors could watch the blacksmiths at work, alongside the clamor of the live performances by local hardcore bands.

Drawing on Frome's heritage of skilled metal-working, the resulting crystalline form was put on public display for a single evening – paraded in the Carnival procession on a trailer towed by a black Mitsubishi Warrior pick-up truck to a hardcore soundtrack, and escorted by musicians and fans of the genre, creating a caustic rupture between the majorettes and kooky, decorated floats.

Presenting the work for the first time within a gallery environment, the exhibition at WORKS|PROJECTS provides another opportunity to see one of Stokes most unique projects – an abstract sculptural symbol for the rhizomic nature of collaborative creativity.

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About Matt Stokes

Matt Stokes was born in Penzance in 1973 and graduated from Newcastle University in 1993. He lives and works in Newcastle / Gateshead.

Stokes recently staged a major solo exhibition *The Gainsborough Packet &c.* at 176, London (February – June 2009), shown simultaneously at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (March – May 2009). He was awarded the Becks Futures Prize in 2006.

Other recent solo exhibitions include *these are the days*, Arthouse, Texas (2009), *[un]promised Land*, attitudes espace d'arts contemporains, Geneva (2007) and *Pills to Purge Melancholy* Collective Gallery, Edinburgh (2006). He has shown extensively in numerous group exhibitions including *See This Sound*, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz, (2009), *Crossing*, Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato, (2008), *I desired what you were, I need what you are*, MAZE, Turin (2008), *The Weasel: Pop Music and Contemporary Art*, South London Gallery, London (2007), *Street: behind the cliché*, Witte de With, Rotterdam (2006), *Our Surroundings*, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee (2005) and *Gatsbyter*, Plan 9, Bristol (2005).

Notes to editors

Preview:

Friday 17th September, 6-8pm

Exhibition open:

18th September – 23rd October, 12-6pm, Thursday – Saturday or by appointment.

Special event:

Independent State Reunion, Saturday October 23rd, 3-6pm

Matt Stokes' work was originally commissioned by Foreground for Independent State, Frome, 2009. Join us for a special exhibition & launch of the Independent State publication at WORKS|PROJECTS & Bristol Diving School, which is located 1 minute's walk from the gallery. See www.foregroundprojects.org.uk for more details of the original project.

About WORKS|PROJECTS

WORKS|PROJECTS is a commercial gallery established by the independent curator Simon Morrissey. WORKS|PROJECTS works with a small stable of distinctive British artists and is located on Sydney Row in Bristol's harbour side, which has steadily developed into the centre for visual arts in the city. The gallery is located on the same block as both Spike Island and Picture This and is only 10 minutes walk from Arnolfini.

WORKS|PROJECTS receives support from Spike Island.

Spike Island Foreground

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