

# NewArtCentre.

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## PRESS RELEASE

### TOBY ZIEGLER: SLAVE

23 September – 26 November 2017

Toby Ziegler's second exhibition at the New Art Centre continues his investigation into the ways in which objects gather and shed narratives. The art historical motifs that Ziegler chooses to work with have complex layered histories of their own, but also have autobiographical significance for the artist. The new sculpture, painting and screen prints in this exhibition all overtly refer to the work of Henri Matisse. For Ziegler, Matisse is a complicated figure. Ziegler was drawn to Matisse when discovering painting as a child, but also found the jubilant, decorative nature of Matisse's work bizarre given that it was made against the backdrop of two world wars. Furthermore, this exhibition shares its title, *Slave*, with one of the exhibited sculptures: a life-size standing figure with pronounced contrapposto, cast in aluminium. The sculpture is informed by Matisse's 'Madeleine I' (1901), but its title alludes to another reference as both sculptures echo Michelangelo's 'Dying Slave' (1516).



'Slave' in progress, Ziegler Studio, London June 2017

Central to Ziegler's practice is a negotiation between digital and manual approaches to generating forms and images. This new group of sculptures, the result of more than three years of experimentation, take the logic of 3D printers as a model but involve many convoluted processes. As with Ziegler's previous work, the sculptures' initial forms are created one polygon at a time using 3D modelling software. This virtual model is then sliced at regular intervals to produce a set of templates which are printed onto cardboard sheets. Using these templates, Ziegler builds up coils of clay to create the sculptural form one layer at a time, replicating by hand the actions of a 3D printer. Ziegler has always been preoccupied with different speeds of gesture in both painting and sculpture. In both media, slow, painstaking work made over weeks is suddenly disrupted by more physical, improvised gestures made in a matter of moments. In these new sculptures the coiled clay forms are deformed and ruptured, creating baroque flourishes amongst the otherwise regular strata. Ziegler makes 3D scans of these models, enlarges the scale digitally, and 3D prints them. Ziegler tests the capabilities of the 3D printer, asking the coils of hot, liquid plastic it produces to defy gravity before setting solid. This results in periodic disruptions in the print that resemble festoons of spaghetti. The disruptions in the print echo the disruptions in the original clay forms.

The painting in this exhibition also considers a loss of information due to digital translation. The results from a Google image search for Matisse's 'Large Reclining Nude' (1935) provide the source imagery for Ziegler's painting. This image search returned a grid of 18 degraded thumbnails of the painting with varying colour casts. The grid in the background of Matisse's painting is echoed by the grid of images on the search page and the visible grid of pixels that make up the jpegs. Ziegler carefully paints his source image onto a large aluminium panel over a period of several weeks. He then works back into it with an orbital sander, removing weeks of work in a few minutes, obliterating much of the original image to reveal the aluminium beneath and creating a new image in the process.

Matisse's four reliefs depicting progressively abstracted representations of a woman's back are the inspiration for four new prints by Ziegler. Pixelated images of Matisse's friezes screen printed onto lightweight aluminium blankets connect the 2D and 3D works in the show. Matisse's 'Backs I to IV' (1908- 1931) operate somewhere between image and sculpture. Ziegler has reduced them to 2D images but then thrust them back into an awkward in-between dimension by printing them onto the crinkled foil survival blankets used by marathon runners. Adding another chapter to the circulation of these images, the four prints will be in an unlimited edition, free for gallery visitors to take away.

Toby Ziegler (b. 1972) studied at Central St Martin's. His show at the New Art Centre coincides with his major exhibition ***The Genesis Speech at The Freud Museum from 13 September – 26 November 2017***. Other solo exhibitions include: The Hepworth Wakefield (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki (2012); Zabudowicz Collection, London (2012); New Art Gallery, Walsall (2011); Longside Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, and the Chisenhale Gallery, London. His work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions, including: Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (2017); Cassina Projects, New York (2017); Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne (2017); The Art Gallery of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan (2016); Winter Palace and 21er Haus, Belvedere Museum, Vienna (2014); Tokyo Station Gallery, Tokyo (2015) and The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia (2009). His work is included in important public and private collections around the world including The British Council; Tate; Hudson Valley Centre for Contemporary Art and Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania.

**PRESS PREVIEW: SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2017** Free bus from London departing Tate Britain (Millbank) at 9.45 a.m. and leaving Roche Court at 3 p.m. Please contact us to reserve a place or for further information about the exhibition: 01980 862244 [nac@sculpture.uk.com](mailto:nac@sculpture.uk.com)