

THE CYNTHIA CORBETT GALLERY

TOM LEIGHTON – OUTWARDS FROM HOME

Solo exhibition presented by The Cynthia Corbett Gallery
Royal Opera Arcade Gallery, 5b Pall Mall, St. James's, London, SW1Y 4UY
2nd – 14th October 2017 during Frieze Week



... looking back, perhaps the greatest liberating factor lay in the fact that I was forced, to get out into the city [...] and look at it with fresh eyes. Every city has its own surges of life, its patterns of movement, and no amount of office-bound mapping and statistical compilation can convey the vital insights that direct knowledge of this kind can provide.

Kenneth Watts, *Outwards from Home*, 1997

The Cynthia Corbett Gallery is delighted to announce the forthcoming solo exhibition of new works by Tom Leighton.

Outwards From Home is born from Leighton's recent travels to Hong Kong, Macau, Dubai and Tokyo. The exhibition title, *Outwards From Home*, is borrowed from a book written by the artist's grandfather Kenneth Watts, which recounts the phenomenon of urbanization in Britain and Asia against a backdrop of change in the global, political and economic climate. Watts draws on almost half a century's experience with the United Nations Development Programmes to make a strong plea for the organization. As a personal odyssey, it reflects encounters with men and women throughout the world. Leighton's new works hold a similar resonance, moving seamlessly between global commentary, an individual's path through the city, and by way of a homage to his grandfather, his own personal ancestry – he looks outwards and returns to home.

Following in his grandfather's footsteps, Leighton reopens the symbiotic terrain of architecture and society. He plays the big Other: like the gigantic vertical zoos born by his creation, he casts a magisterial eye over the events taking place below.



Leighton's recent works extract from the shocking rapidity of urban development; steps beyond urbanization towards super-urbanization, from globalization to hyper-globalization. They form an artistic spin on Foucauldian surveillance and technological euphoria; technology's shared capacity for human emancipation and the threat that it could one day supersede human control. Leighton revels in the freedom from physical and practical restraints while paying tribute to the great minds that develop functioning super structures, the evermore gravity defying architecture of the world.

In his astounding new compositions, surface is negotiated with an engineer's touch. Digitally created, fictional environments are populated by opulent forms and functional features; nationally honoured landmarks feature alongside everyday town planning; advertising boards glisten above converging highways. Exploring the diversity of Asian architecture in concept and design, Leighton positions iconic features in close proximity while calling upon colour and form to render the most sublime, kaleidoscopic distortions. Vision is destabilized with images that are simultaneously symmetrical and off-balance. The futuristic is fused with exquisite historical details, geographically-disparate monuments are positioned alongside one another, transforming recognisable cities into timeless non-sites. In the manner of all great architects, Leighton instils the fantastic and abstract with concrete existence.

Tom Leighton was born in London in 1981. Following his BA in printmaking from the University of Brighton in 2004, he gained an MA from the Royal College of Art in 2006. Leighton's expansive and vertigo inducing works are the product of years spent carefully assembling hundreds and thousands of photographs. In 2006 he won the John Purcell Paper Prize and the Thames & Hudson Book Prize. He has exhibited in London, Paris, Berlin, Hong Kong, Basel, Tokyo and throughout the United States. Major exhibitions include: ar•chi•tec•ton•ic at Site/109 / New York, 2014; "Digital Darkroom" Slideshow Night at The Annenberg Space for Photography / Los Angeles,

2012; RE:DEFINE at The Goss-Michael Foundation / Dallas, 2012; and Tom Leighton (Solo Exhibition) at Foundation Starke Berlin / Berlin, 2010. Collections include: The Sandor Family Collection / Chicago, MuCEM (French National Museum of European and Mediterranean civilizations), Tiroche Collection / UK/Israel, The Shein Family Collection of Pennsylvania, Felix Robyns, 12 Advisors Group / London/Brussels, Nicholas Topiol, President of Christian Lacroix / Paris, The UBS Art Collection, JCA Group / London & The Victoria and Albert Museum. His highly technical constructions have been critically acclaimed by publications The Independent, Senso, Le Monde and Art Review.

Images

Tom Leighton
The Valley, 2017
Edition of 5
C-Type Print / Perspex Mounted in frame
85 x 38.5 in.

Tom Leighton
Skytree, 2017
Edition of 5
C-Type Print / Perspex Mounted in frame
85 x 38.5 in.

Ends

For more press information and images, please contact Celia Kinchington on +44 (0) 20 8947 6782 or celia@thecynthiacorbettgallery.com / Millie Print at millie@thecynthiacorbettgallery.com

Notes to editors

Tom Leighton - Outwards From Home
Royal Opera Arcade Gallery, 5b Pall Mall, St James's, London, SW1Y 4UY
Exhibition runs 2nd – 14th October 2017 during Frieze Week
Public opening times: 11am to 7pm daily (or by appointment)
Nearest tube: Green Park or Piccadilly Circus (St. James's exit)
Private View: Tuesday 3rd October 2017, 6 – 9.30 pm

About Kenneth Watts

Kenneth Watts was born in 1921. He trained as a town planner, one of a generation of young people who believed in a future of optimistic urban reconstruction after the atrocities and destruction of two world wars. In 1952, after working with local authorities in the UK, Watts was appointed Research Officer on the Singapore Master Plan Team. A few years later he joined the United Nations to begin work on the city plan for Djakarta, Indonesia. When he contracted TB in 1959, he returned to the UK and on his recovery, worked as a Town Planning Advisor to the British Commonwealth Office. He re-joined the UN in 1963 on their technical assistance programmes and was based in the UNHQ in New York. Later he was appointed UNDP Resident Representative (Chief of Mission) in Burma (now Myanmar), and between retirement in 1982 and 1992, he undertook missions to nine Asian countries, including many for UN Habitat and service as Resident Representative ad interim in Pakistan and Thailand. Watts died in 2000.

About The Cynthia Corbett Gallery

The Cynthia Corbett Gallery is an international contemporary art gallery, which has an annual exhibition programme in London, Los Angeles and New York, as well as exhibiting at contemporary art fairs worldwide. The Gallery represents established American, British and European artists whose careers have been nurtured since the Gallery's inception in 2004. www.thecynthiacorbettgallery.com