

No 20

Phil Hale & Jim Threapleton

E N E M Y

No 20

20 Cross Street

N1 2BG London

29th September - 11th November 2017

No 20 is delighted to present **Enemy**, an exhibition bringing together new works by two exceptional artists, **Phil Hale** and **Jim Threapleton**. Nuclear paranoia, religious fanaticism, economic and ecological catastrophe – a new age of anxiety has re-animated the existential concerns that shaped cultural production in the post-war years of the twentieth century. This exhibition of painting indirectly alludes to the contemporary disquiet of extreme polarities through the antagonism and friction between representation and abstraction. While Hale and Threapleton navigate opposing states, they are bound together by a visual language that animates a precarious, volatile, and profoundly unreliable territory.

Enmity is an engine – the painter is in conflict with subject, technical limit, material threshold, intent and self. Hale and Threapleton employ strategies of visual sabotage to corrupt and repurpose narrative and form, warping it towards the ungraspable and unstable, poisonous variant. Image, wherever it might have originated, becomes contingent. Hale pushes figuration to the point of self-immolation, while Threapleton bullies and cajoles abstract mark to the threshold of representation. Under such terms, painting becomes a virtual Mobius-band; indeterminacy returning the spectator to the point of departure.



Jim Threapleton *Enemy* (study XII) 2017



Phil Hale *Enemy* 2017

Phil Hale & Jim Threapleton: *Enemy* is at No 20 from 29 September to 11 November 2017

About the artists

Phil Hale is an award-winning artist based in London. Although primarily a painter his practice has also included film, photography, and sculpture. In 2008, Hale was commissioned to paint the official portrait of Tony Blair, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He was selected for the Prague Biennale in 2011, and in 2013 he shot G-Star's global fashion campaign, starring Lily Cole and Magnus Carlsen. His work hangs in the permanent collections of the National Portrait Gallery, the House of Commons, Lords, and in numerous private and public collections internationally. For the catalogue of Hale's 2015 New York solo show *Life Wants to Live* Michiko Oki writes:

"Hale accumulates distortions, compresses them into a stratum, then cracks them open again and layers other images and shapes until the significance, or the narrative of each layer, disappears into another. Rather than a collage that expects 'new' meaning to emerge out of the juxtaposition of different visual orientations, his paintings aim for the disappearance of one image into another, one narrative into another, one system of seeing into another, and are haunted by the desire to move away from what it originally was. As a result, Hale's images throw us into an accumulation of ambiguity and plausibility. With their endless reflections and resemblances, they evoke an obscure feeling of anxiety that makes us long for meanings and stories behind the shapes."

Jim Threapleton is an acclaimed artist with a background in filmmaking. He studied History of Art at Manchester University, before establishing an international profile in film with campaigns for MTV, Sony, Unicef and Fifa. In 2008 his BIFA nominated improvised debut feature film, *Extraordinary Rendition* premiered in competition at the Edinburgh and Locarno International Film Festivals. Working with film in the abstract provoked a return to painting in 2009. He completed his MA in 2010, and has recently been awarded his doctorate in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art, London. Of Threapleton's recent work the curator and writer Matt Price comments:

"Threapleton's paintings are abstractions that are in the process of becoming figurative yet never arriving there, always in the midst of forming yet never becoming. In his practice he is circumnavigating the moment at which abstraction triggers our eyes and minds to read the imagery as if it were a depiction of real objects in real space, but there are no real objects and there is no real space. Instead, we are caught in a cognitive trap of sorts, in limbo between differing routes for mental image processing. It is an exciting place to be as we're geared up to decipher, ready to interpret, poised to make up the missing pieces of visual information, but the answers are in our minds, the questions in the painting."

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About the gallery

Opened in January 2017, No 20 is a new 3000 square foot centre for contemporary art located in the heart of Islington. Envisioned as a multi-functional space, No 20 hosts a programme of exhibitions, performances and events that support emerging and established artists working across all media, including self-produced and curated shows, and collaborations with other galleries and arts organisations.

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