

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Steven Claydon / Compulsive Communicators  
Martin Creed

September 14, 2013 – October 19, 2013

Opening on the occasion of Open Art: Friday, September 13, 2013, 6-9 pm

The artists will be present.

Opening hours Open Art: Sat/Sun, September 14/15, 2013, 11 am-6 pm

Steven Claydon, *The passage of differentiated substance (detail)*, 2012, photo: Andy Keate

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The oeuvre of British artist Steven Claydon spans sculpture, installation, video, performance art and painting. A central theme of his work is the challenging or reappraisal of dominant thought patterns, canons and taxonomies. What is it that makes a mere “thing” a work of art, and what influential role does history play in it all?

Claydon questions these relationships with playful precision, working with a diversity of materials and within a broad aesthetic spectrum. Artefacts are juxtaposed with everyday objects, replicas with originals. The form of presentation, which is always part and parcel of the work, evokes the exhibiting traditions of Natural History museums and prehistoric collections, inevitably triggering questions about how collections and archives are structured, and how art is curated in general.

Claydon's works often relate to the genius loci of the exhibition venue. Frequently, they embrace the theories and concepts of people who in, their thoughts and actions, offer viable alternatives to normative ideologies and power structures. Thus it is that the *Passage of differentiated substance* of 2012, created for his solo exhibition at firstsite in Colchester/UK, is graced by the face of Alfred Russel Wallace, whose own under-celebrated contribution to the theory of evolution prompted Charles Darwin to publish his book *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859. Formed as a relief, Wallace's face looms eerily out of the side of a large barrel, which seems to have been cast in iron, but on closer scrutiny turns out to be made of ceramic, its shape at once reminiscent of a modern steel barrel and an ancient Roman burial urn. Mounted on a Formica pedestal, it stands high in the midst of an assemblage of two rail-like girders and three motorbike wheel rims made of ceramic and a forth wheel cut from a wicker effigy of a Harley Davidson motorbike. Lying at the end of each rail is a one cent coin.

Claydon's aim is not to illustrate or quote from ancient history but rather to create works that confront the viewer with a sense of the inevitable arbitrariness of all historical 'knowledge'. He builds up associations, creating a “climate” that defies all attempts at linear interpretation or a finite reading.

Steven Claydon (\*1969) lives and works in London. His international solo exhibitions include the following: *Culpable Earth*, firstsite, Colchester, UK (2012); *Mon Plaisir...Votre Travail*, La Salle de Bains, Lyon, France (2011); *Goldene Zeiten/Golden Times*, Haus der Kunst, Munich (2010); *The Ancient Set and the Fictional Pixel*, Serpentine Pavilion, London, *The Ancient Set*, International Project Space, Bournville, Birmingham (2008) and *Courtesy of the Neighborhood Watch*, White Columns, New York (2006). Claydon's solo exhibition *Culpable Earth* at firstsite in 2012 was accompanied by a publication with the same title.