

MICHAEL DEAN: SIC GLYPHS

18 MAR - 22 MAY 2016
MAIN GALLERY
ADMISSION FREE

EXHIBITION GUIDE

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SLG

South London Gallery 65–67 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UH

020 7703 6120 mail@southlondongallery.org

www.southlondongallery.org

Twitter: @SLG_artupdates, Instagram: @southlondongallery

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Michael Dean works across sculpture, photography, drawing and performance, all of which are rooted in his writing and the publication of his work as text in both exhibition and book form. His writing is at the heart of his practice and is the driver behind his transformation of words into physical objects with meanings as fluid and open-ended as the interpretations which others chose to impose on them. He is creating an evolving language based on typographical alphabets, but deliberately declines to offer an accompanying dictionary. Dean's explicit intention is for it to matter that it's you who walks in through the door: that you are so much more than the reader of his text.

For his South London Gallery exhibition, Dean immediately challenges visitors to think for themselves, barring the main entrance with a cluster of immovable sculptures which offer tantalising views onto a new shore of a text, thereby beckoning a search for an alternative way in. The ensuing journey is rewarded by a different encounter with the works, in an intimate experience that centres viewers as protagonists in what the artist describes as a “*typographical texty field or a fXXXing forest of physically abstracted versions of my writing*”.

In disarming contrast to the emphatically brilliant expanse of whiteness against which they are set, Dean's forms in concrete, naked steel reinforcement (rebar) and other do-it-yourself materials invoke the physical reality of contemporary urban surfaces. Twisted and contorted, propped up or tied down, these apparently abstract 'glyphs' are never completely without figurative potential, occupying an indeterminate territory all of their own. Holes drilled through some of the works seem to invite a particular perspective, but could be eyes as much as spy-holes, sinister as much as hilarious, and there is no way of knowing if the casts of the artist's and his sons' clenched fists which punctuate the show denote aggression or defence, celebration or defiance. Just as his play on the word 'shore' on shutter stickers throughout the show is seemingly unending, Dean's work is shot through with ambiguity, endlessly oscillating between different ideas, taking viewers in whatever direction they choose but never giving them total free reign or allowing an absolute conclusion.

Generously supported by The Henry Moore Foundation, Shane Akeroyd, Vicky Hughes and John Smith and Marco Rossi.

With special thanks to Herald Street.

The Henry Moore
Foundation

Photography is permitted in the galleries.

Biography

Michael Dean (b. 1977, Newcastle Upon Tyne). Solo shows in 2016 at the South London Gallery, and Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, US.

Recent solo shows include *Qualities of Violence*, de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam and *Jumping Bones*, Extra City Kunstal, Antwerp (2015); *HA HA HA HA HA HA*, Kunst Forum Ludwig, Aachen (2014), *The Upper Room* at David Zwirner (with Fred Sandback), London (2014), Arnolfini, Bristol (2013), Cubitt, London (2012), Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2012), Kunstverein, Freiburg (2011), Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, London (2011) and Nomas Foundation, Rome (2010).

Group shows include *Albert the Kid Is Ghosting*, The David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2015), *Sculptures Also Die*, curated by Lorenzo Benedetti, CCC Strozziina, Florence (2015), *The Noing Uv It*, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (2014), *What is Real*, curated by Stephanie Rosenthal, The Hayward Gallery, London (2014), *MIRRORCITY*, curated by Stephanie Rosenthal, The Hayward Gallery, London (2014), *Manners of Matter*, curated by Chris Sharp, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (2014), *Thousand Doors*, curated by Iwona Blazwick, Whitechapel at The Gennadius Library, Athens (2014), *A History of Inspiration*, curated by Adnan Lyildiz, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013), Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2012+2011), *Beyond the Fragile Geometry of Sculpture*, curated by Lorenzo Benedetti, De Vleeshal, Middelburg (2011), *We Will Live, We Will See*, curated by Pavel S. Pys, Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2011) and *Sculpture Also Dies*, curated by Lorenzo Benedetti, Kunsthalle Mulhouse (2010).

ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

Reading: For Shore

Wed 4 May, 7.30pm, Free, Main Gallery

Michael Dean reads sic glyphs.

Exhibition Tours

Daily, 1pm & Last Fridays, 7pm, Free

Join the SLG's gallery assistants for an informal, drop-in tour of the current exhibitions.

Booking for most events is essential, book online or call 020 7703 6120.

*Fans pay less for tickets – join today and receive 10% discount on items in the SLG Bookshop
www.southlondongallery.org/fans*

ALSO ON AT THE SLG

Paul Maheke: I Lost Track of the Swarm

Until 22 May

First Floor Galleries, Free