

EXHIBITION GUIDE

RECYCLE GROUP: KEEP ME UPDATED YOUR HOLINESS

Exhibition: 20.11.2015 – 10.01.2016

Private View: 19 November | 6-8pm

Location:

Gazelli Art House
39 Dover Street
London W1S 4NN



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Photography in partnership with Andrey Losev

Gazelli Art House is pleased to present a solo exhibition with **Recycle Group**, the award winning Russian art duo comprising of Andrey Blokhin and Georgy Kuznetsov.

The exhibition *Keep Me Updated Your Holiness*, introduces the duo's two latest bodies of work including 'Conversion', recently exhibited at the 56th Venice Biennale within the Church of Sant'Antonin and Future Archaeology an on-going body of work where the artists turn to history to address topical issues and aspects of contemporary lifestyle.

Inspired by the stream of virtual information that flows endlessly from computers and mobile devices into all spheres of human activity, 'Conversion' compares the globalisation of information networks and our need for new technologies to the historic conversion of Christianity. Proposing the Internet as a new vehicle for faith, a belief system where advice on everyday problems, health and assistance with technical issues is sought online.

'Conversion' highlights the abnormality that the more people are connected to digital devices, the more distance they create between each other, expressing their emotions through digital media while losing all contact with reality.

"This body of work side-steps religious connotations, as the heritage of knowledge and progression is fixed in the hands of technology and relied on it as the ultimate and efficient way of passing information from generation to generation" - Andrey Blokhin, Recycle Group

Through the use of polyurethane, plastic mesh, rubber, polyethylene, wood recycled materials combined with new technologies the duo create sculptures that portray our culture's adoration for new technologies. The artists seek to give their viewers an idea of the future traces to be left by the paradoxes of our own age, of what will be marked in history. Turning to history to illustrate relevant issues and shocking aspects of contemporary lifestyle, their sculptures take on the appearance of ancient monuments that display the ravages of time.

As an introduction to the series within a much larger body of work titled 'Future Archaeology', the duo have created an interactive robotic figure, which assists the viewer with the viewing of a set series of 15 photographs* individually selected by the robot. Depicting landscapes captured during the artists' recent visit to Iceland, these rich, natural and historic landscapes appear to be of untouched sceneries, however at closer inspection, elements of our everyday life appear entrenched into these sceneries: a Wi-Fi or a Bluetooth icon appear unassumingly, further questioning the advancement in technology and at what cost is this taking place. In a high-tech archival presentation, the robot serves both as an assistant to view the works and as a tool without which these works will be inaccessible. The robot is programmed by the artists to perform specific instructions involving picking up the photograph, holding it up for a period of time, and slotting it back to its position before going onto the next photograph.

Notes to Editor

*Photographs created in partnership with Andrey Losev

GAZELLI ART HOUSE

Notes To Editors

Contemporary art gallery Gazelli Art House supports and presents a wide range of international artists, presenting a broad and critically acclaimed program of exhibitions to a diverse audience through international exhibition spaces in London and Baku. Gazelli Art House was founded in 2003 in Baku, Azerbaijan where it held exhibitions with Azeri artists. From 2010, having hosted conceptually interlinked off-site exhibitions across London, founder and Director of Gazelli Art House, Mila Askarova, opened a permanent space on Dover Street, London in March 2012. As part of Gazelli Art House's on-going commitment to art education, the gallery hosts a series of events and talks to run alongside each exhibition.

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In 1922 a photographic image authored by Man Ray and / or Marcel Duchamp was published in photo-surrealist journal "Littérature". The image was entitled "A view from an airplane". Later on, in 1934 the same photograph went out signed "Dust breeding". Actually, the photograph was taken in Duchamp's studio and is a fragment of Duchamp's "Large Glass" covered in the dust it had collected while he was in New York. The picture itself, as we may presently discover, is nothing more than a sneer, eliciting the ambiguity of photographic documentation. This particular image set up a crossroads between photography, sculpture, action and performance.

The core of Recycle Group's project "Keep Me Updated Your Holiness" is a documentary retrofuturistic fabula. Landscapes depicted in a major installation, a collection of images, manipulated by a robotic arm, evoke the very same question raised by Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, even in the era of digital photography. Is it the documentation of a gesture? Is it a piece of land art? How real is this representation? What does this gesture include?

The iconic oeuvre of land art, a Spiral Jetty (1970) by Robert Smithson, is nowadays almost converted into an image: being widely seen photographed and filmed, it is much more rarely sighted in real life. Thus, a gesture of the artist is encoded into its representation since the most common means of its demonstration is photography. Robert Morris, in his article *Aligned with Nazca*, published in October 1975 in *Artforum*, set a parallel between the spatial comprehension of land art and the structure of nazca lines in Peru: "What one sees on the ground at Nazca has little to do with seeing objects. For if in the urban context space is merely the absence of objects, at Nazca space as distance is rendered visible only as a function of distance. If one sees here by looking down, across, through, do the lines perhaps also point to something in that distance?". Morris remarks that as well as nazca lines, land art required particular settings of viewing, those standing outside the Cartesian grid. Exactly the same method of representation is played up in Recycle Group's series, presented in the exhibition "Keep Me Updated Your Holiness". Besides a reference to the conceptual sense of nazca lines as messages to gods, Recycle Group appropriates the canon of its morphological perception.

Fake photographic documentation, blurring the lines of sculpture, performance and photography itself, is a manoeuvre for the first time accomplished in Recycle's group corpus of work. They attempt to endure conception of fake artefacts, enrooted in the reflection on retrofuturism, raising the essential for the duo question "how could the future look in the past?" Fascinated by the science-fictional narrative, they foretell of a junction of virtual and tangible realities, exposing the fact of being online as being blessed and saved. Recycle Group manifests the iconography of applications programs as communication signs between humankind and divines of the future, seeing them as "nazca lines of the aftertime".

At long last, a divine could only exist in man's description, perceived in signs he disposes of and is able to grasp. As Walter Benjamin in his essay *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man* (1916) remarks, God "did not wish to subject him to language, but in man God set language, which had served him as medium of creation, free".

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