

The Averard Hotel

10 Lancaster Gate, London W2 3LH

Private View: 12-6pm, Saturday 9 January, 2016

open Thu-Sun 12-6pm // until 31 January 2016



The Averard Hotel is a new project space located in a previously abandoned hotel in Lancaster Gate. The inaugural exhibition, organized by Slate Projects, showcases the work of thirteen contemporary artists. The main reception rooms play host to solo presentations and there is a group exhibition in the old ballroom. Titled *Cybernetic Meadow* this show-within-a-show is inspired by a poem by Richard Brautigan (1967) in which he imagines a world where “mammals and computers live together in mutually programming harmony.” It includes two photographs from **Gordon Cheung**'s *New Order* series – still lifes from the Dutch Golden Age glitched by an algorithm – as well as a large painting evoking both concrete and metaphysical spaces of speculation. Also exhibited here are a digitally rendered green marble bust by **Jon Rafman**, and new paintings by **Lee Marshall** and **Sean Steadman** in which organic and mechanical life forms intermingle.

The Averard Hotel is inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia. Working on the principle that our world is determined more by space than by time, we conceive of the world as a system of relations between locations or sites. Heterotopias are born from our putting into question this fixed set of relations. In contrast to utopias, heterotopias are concrete spaces but maintain an analogical distance from society. Examples include theatres, museums, colonies, brothels, prisons, boarding schools, hotels, gardens, festivals and, above all, ships: “In civilizations without ships, dreams dry up, espionage replaces adventure, and the police replaces corsairs.” (Michel Foucault, *Des Espaces Autres*, 1967)

In her latest work, **Jolanta Rejs** has combined sailmaking with her characteristic monotype woodcut prints. It tells the story of Masuria, a Polish border region dotted with many lakes, from reconstructed postcards and gravestones; a memorial to the

slate projects

region's displaced populations and derelict heritage. **Pablo Smidt's** minimalist sculptures are a playful take on the otherwise serious tropes of modernist sculpture. Oversized cupcake wrappers cast in fibreglass mounted to the wall and a cast iron jigsaw in lieu of a carpet take us back to the original impulse of sculpture.

Shubha Taparia's site-specific installation connects the Averard Hotel to a Ginger Factory in Mattanchery, India. Photographs of the crumbling factory are 'restored' with gold leaf, a process which Taparia repeats on the walls of the hotel. **Nicholas Johnson's** rich depictions of decaying nature are displayed here for the first time as floor-based sculptures. Frenzied, botanic, psychedelic works which incorporate abstraction, found objects and figurative gestures to challenge our ability to look for patterns in a forest of signs.

Shiraz Bayjoo is projecting his recent film *Ile de France*, a painterly and non-narrative look at the social and geographic textures of Mauritian identity. The projection is accompanied by found furniture pieces, salvaged from the streets of London and layered with archival images, acrylic paint and resin. **Egle Jauncems** is exhibiting a new body of work inspired by Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, a story which takes place in Venice's *Grand Hôtel des Bains*, a famous destination on the Lido shuttered for the last five years and awaiting renovation into luxury apartments. The old Aschenbach's ruinous desire for young Tadzio playing on the beach animates Jauncems' installation, which simultaneously probes the boundary between painting and sculpture.

Joel Wylie's site-specific work destabilises the viewer's sense of scale. Massive blades of grass painted onto the wall and populated by tiny beings, as well as a set of garden chairs arranged for contemplating the 'sun', set the stage for an anxious psychological space. **Ishai Rimmer** is showing three new big paintings which construct biblical and art historical allegories from everyday autobiographical moments. **Rory Menage** forges his personal response to the canon of Yorkshire sculptors – who saw landscape as a key reference for portraying the human condition – in weathered iron and polished bronze. Also rich with references to modern masters such as Brancusi, Epstein and Giacometti; this is Menage's first exhibition in London.

About of the Averard Hotel:

The Averard Hotel stands at the western end of the Lancaster Gate development. Its history is bound up with the nineteenth-century urbanisation of Bayswater and can be divided into two periods. First erected in 1856, with English Baroque details and French mannerisms, Lancaster Gate quickly became a fashionable district for wealthy families. In the 1920s, with servant's wages on the rise, the houses were sub-divided into flats or agglomerated into hotels. Today, While awaiting renovation into luxury flats, the drop ceilings and partition walls in the Averard Hotel have been stripped backed revealing its layered history and serving as a scene for the exhibitions within.



