

# VITRINE



Press Release

## **Alfie Strong** **Beyond the Pylon of the Pit**

12 January 2018 - 2 April 2018. VITRINE, London.

Private View: Thursday 11 January 2018, 6 - 9pm.

VITRINE is delighted to announce Alfie Strong's first solo exhibition in London, which explores melancholic humour within the everyday and the mundane. Presenting a new series of works within a site-responsive installation, the exhibition employs mythology in search of transcendental and emotional meaning within basic elements of our day-to-day lives.

The title 'Beyond the Pylon of the Pit' is taken from the fifth chapter of the abstract work 'Nightside of Eden'. One of nine books making up three trilogies called the 'Typhonian Trilogies; by the widely maligned occultist writer Kenneth Grant. The book talks about the 'reverse' and the effects of its dark energies on the tree of life. Strong describes the work as either an "cabalistic breakthrough" or "psychotic breakdown"; he describes a feeling of "being wrapped up in the language and scenery and desperate for a sense of relatability". It is the combination of this extensive knowledge of mysticism and vivid imagination that the artist draws upon in this new body of work.

Strong uses aesthetics of horror and science fiction genres to create a series of large silk tapestries in muted greens, purples and greys. These hang alongside papier-mâché structures. The process of installing these elements aims to produce an over-theatrical, paranoid, unhinged, and macabre display; Observed as a non-authoritative and sensory, sequentially dispersed narrative. He extracts areas of mythology, magic and folklore, combining them with things that are current cultural problems - such as government failures, raising water levels, capitalist acceleration, marginalisation of minority groups, nuclear unrest, oppression of the disadvantaged.

Strong explores ideas that speculate on the future of our planet with inherent gloom. Yet from this hopelessness, pop-nihilism, social resignation and a slow sardonic cancellation of the future is born. This is a narrative that runs through the work, and is home to some key characters, places and tools from exploration into the Arcane.

Fabrication and materiality are key to Strong's work, with the performativity of assemblage running parallel to the themes of disarray within the work. As explored in Kenneth Grants writing, the works act as a dark "mirror image" or a "Universe B", a "non-existent" reality underlying our normal Universe A.

Using VITRINE as a tableau in which the works can place themselves, Strong reimagines the gallery as an abyss, the bottom of a large lake or unfathomable expansive nothing. This melancholic metaphor centres itself in each element of the installation and will wistfully reside in this abyss like floating chattering matter.

#### Artist Biography

Alfie Strong (b. 1989, Shrewsbury, UK) lives and works in Leeds. He graduated from Leeds College of Art in 2010, studied an alternative MA with School of the Damned in 2015, and is about to start an MFA at Glasgow School of Art. He has had residencies with Residency Exchange, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh (2013) and Summer Residency, South Square Gallery, Bradford (2011).

Solo and duo exhibitions include; Dormant Parasite w/ Jake Kent, CBS, Liverpool (2017); Green Fuzz w/ Uma Breakdown, Xero, Kline & Coma, London (2016); Heart Shaped like a Baseball Bat, Periclo, Oriel Wrexham, Wrexham (2015); 36890 Daze, Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun, Leeds (2015); Je m'appelle Mother Fucker, à côté du 69, Nantes, France (2014); The Executioner Executes Himself, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh (2013).

Selected group exhibitions include; Cheap Seats, It's Kind of Hard to Explain, London (2017); Last Chance to Paradise, Collar, Manchester (2017); Worried Mother, Workplace, Newcastle, curated by Milk Collective (2016); Exchange Rates, Sluice art Fair, Brooklyn, New York, showing with 12o (2016); General Studies, Outpost, Norwich, curated by Ryan Gander and Jonathan P. Watts (2016); Blind Date, Royal Standard, Liverpool (2016); Rabble MC, Hutt Collective, Nottingham (2015); Tokyo Drift, Millington and Marriott, Art Licks Weekender, London (2015); Manchester Contemporary, Manchester, showing with Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun (2015); The Octopus was Naked but the Crab was Dressed, Plymouth Arts Centre, Plymouth (2015).

#### **For press enquiries, image requests and private view accreditation please contact:**

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#### Notes to Editor

1.

Installation views / press image selection will be released on Wednesday 10 January 2018.

2.

VITRINE is focused on artistic experimentation and development; material-, process- and installation-led practice at its core.

VITRINE encompasses two parts: gallery and projects. The gallery was founded by Alys Williams in London in 2012 (grown from a project space launched in 2010) and in Basel in April 2016. Establishing a strong reputation as a selector and nurturer of new talent, VITRINE invites and fosters the development and presentation of new work in spaces in London, UK, and Basel, Switzerland; at art fairs internationally; and through off-site projects in collaboration with partner organisations.

VITRINE nurtures a rigorous commitment to artist development and represents a growing number of international artists, alongside further exhibited and associated international artists. VITRINE's spaces promote a new model of exhibition- making, encouraging experimentation and installation. Whilst enclosed behind glass, the works extend beyond its boundaries into the surrounding public space. Exhibitions viewable 24/7; Internal viewing rooms open by appointment.