



SKJERP DEG!

KH

Kristin Hjellegjerde

SKJERP DEG!

“This phrase does not bode well for you. It usually means you’re making an idiot of yourself. ‘Skjerp deg’ could be translated as ‘Sharpen yourself up’, and it’s used in all sorts of contexts. Teachers use it to tell students to pay attention. I yell it at friends who are doing something ridiculous. Cops use it to tell off criminals who are obviously lying to them, parents say it when telling off their five-year old who has just drawn with crayons all over the new wallpaper.”

- Kenneth Haug, 10 Untranslatable Norwegian Terms

‘Leave your weapons here’, reads the sign by the door. What weapons might these be, one asks? Surely not the dangerously sharpened sticks leaning against the wall beneath the sign. Guns? Grenades? Perhaps dangerous thoughts? Prejudices, brainwashing and hatred? Whatever the weapons may be, entry into *SKJERP DEG!* (12th of February - 19th of March 2016) at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London, requests the viewer behave themselves, re-examine their attitude and that of their own society, and question certain truths we take for granted. Featuring work by British artist Amir Chasson and Norwegian Fredrik Raddum, as well as an installation by Norwegian artist Sverre Bjertnæs in the gallery’s newly-launched Project Space, these three artists present us with fresh ways of seeing the world. They seek to strip us bare and, in doing so, slowly build us back up to a new truth.

Further inside the gallery interior are large nude figures of men – paintings by Chasson. At nearly two metres tall, the oil on linen paintings present these men in familiar poses, somehow charged with testosterone, though it takes one a second to figure out why – the clue lies in the title of the series: *Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers*. These human references, stripped of all clothes and accessories, are in fact posed ready to fire weapons or jump into action – they embody the violence so glorified by computer games, stripped back to its most naked humanity. Just as Raddum advises visitors to leave their weapons at the door, Chasson's *Human Photo References* appear to have done precisely that. The figures are all the more striking for their tightly-cropped composition, their appearance almost claustrophobic. "The work stems from my preoccupation with borders and space," explains Chasson. "This preoccupation also informs the way I want the work to be seen. The single, lone-standing figures are locked into tightly made-to-measure cropped frames, as if by accident I had run out of space. The idea was to force the viewer to look at it awkwardly from close up, rather than the conventional few steps back."

Chasson, who last exhibited at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery with his 2014 solo show *days of oil and gas*, also presents another, very different, series of paintings, focused instead on the landscape rather than specific human figures. In a reworking of some of famous socialist, activist and writer Annie Bessant's famous Thought-Forms paintings, the iconic works where Bessant deals with concepts of nature and the power of thoughts, and investigates ideas such as music made tangible, Chasson's *Untitled* series tackles ideas of borders and space. "Even more than portraiture, landscape painting is the ultimate 'window on another world'," he says. "It dawned on me that there is a kind of link between landscape and intellectual property – I am thinking of a kind of landscape painting that has more to do with issues of power and land ownership than simple depictions of nature. In my mind, the fences and hedges that mark out fields and forests in the UK serve as a metaphor for intellectual property and copyright, for example."

Just as Chasson's *Untitled* paintings display delineation between the ordered 'real' world (the landscape) and an outburst of phantasmagorical thought forms and shapes, so too Raddum's sculptural works combine order and chaos. With their often satirical undertone, Raddum has explained that his three-dimensional work "requires its own space in the room," as he said in an interview with Lodown Magazine. "The object is then present and ready to start a dialogue with its spectator." He leads us from the striking entrance with *Leave your Weapons Here* and its forest of sharpened sticks (at first appearing like a display of mismatched antlers, until their true nature is revealed) to a room full of sculptures such as *Excavation*, a work of perfectly formed, delectably smooth swathes of plaster that give way to a visceral explosion, as if a mini volcano had ruptured the insides of each sculpture – or rather, as if each sculpture had had its brains blown out. His characteristic dystopian themes embody each and every one of his works, forcing us as viewers to question contemporary culture.

Well-known in his native Norway for his large-scale public sculptures, Raddum has been compared to Jeff Koons for his ability to combine kitsch with a ruthless examination of issues such as consumerism and social dystopia. "Pop culture has acted as a catalyst," he continued in Lodown. "This is a medium I use to generate my stories. Also, clearly my work is greatly coloured by my generation's upbringing [on] Playmobil and Lego." This visual language juxtaposes various themes and media – clay meets metal and plastic to intertwine and form intriguing dialogues with each other – also influenced by Raddum's other work in photography and performance.

Amir Chasson

Born in Israel, British artist Amir Chasson received his MFA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths University, London, in 2010, preceded by an MA in Design from Middlesex University in 2007. In addition to the solo exhibitions *days of oil & gas* at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London (2013) and *My French Nurse's Dream* at Outpost, Norwich (2012), recent group exhibitions include *Concerning the Bodyguard* at The Tetley, Leeds (2014) and the LIMBO Members' Show 2014, selected by artists Bob and Roberta Smith and Turner Contemporary's Head of Exhibitions Sarah Martin. Chasson is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Est-Nord-Est Residency in Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Québec, Canada (2015) and the Abbey Award for a Painting Fellowship at The British School at Rome (2012). His work has been twice selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries (2009 and 2010). His work can be found in private and public collections, including that of Goldsmiths College as well as Saatchi Gallery in London as part of the 2013 exhibition *New Order: British Art Today*. Chasson lives and works in Berlin.



Untitled
2015
oil and household gloss on linen
200 x 130 cm



Untitled
2015
oil and household gloss on linen
200 x 130 cm



Untitled
2015
oil and household gloss on linen
230 x 130 cm



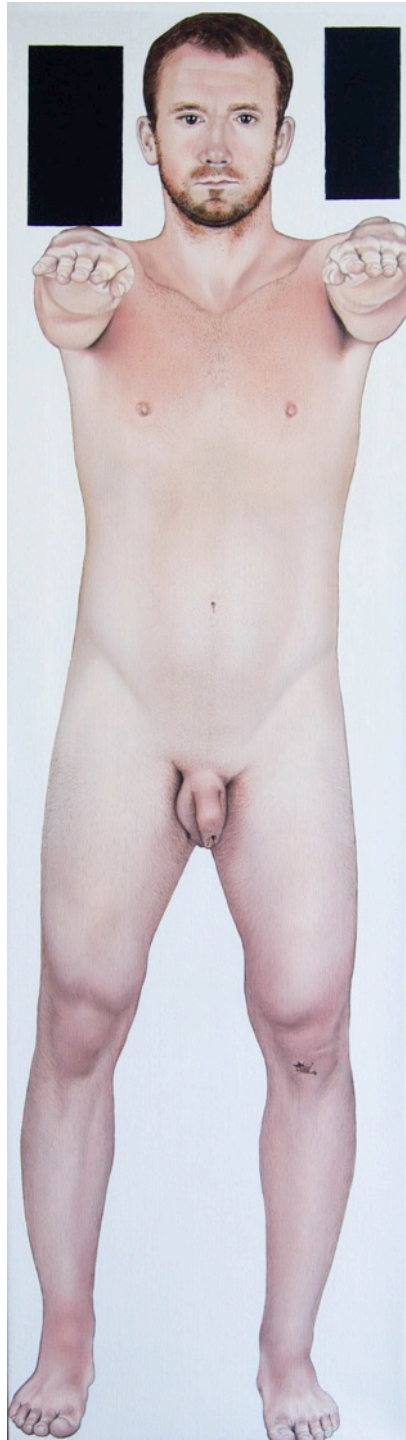
Sketch for Untitled
2015
watercolour and charcoal on paper
51 x 36 cm (framed)



Sketch for Untitled
2015
watercolour and charcoal on paper
61.5 x 39 cm (framed)



Sketch for Untitled
2015
watercolour and charcoal on paper
66 x 38 cm (framed)



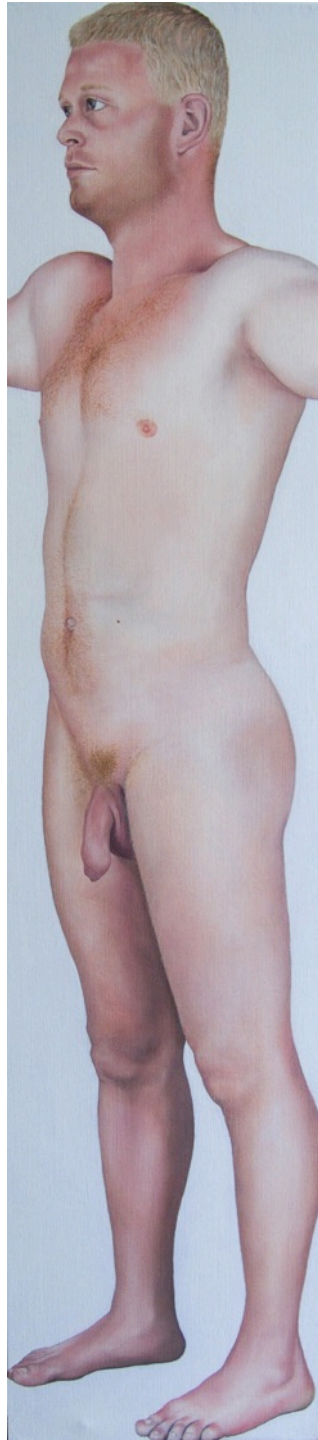
Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers
2014
oil on linen
187 x 53 x 4 cm



Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers
2014
oil on linen
194 x 48.5 x 4 cm



Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers
2014
oil on linen
194 x 48.6 x 4 cm



Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers
2015
oil on linen
188 x 43 x 4 cm



Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers
2015
oil on linen
196 x 49.5 x 4 cm



Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers
2015
oil on linen
196 x 53 x 4 cm



*Human Photo Reference for 3D Artists and Game Developers
2014-15*

Fredrik Raddum

Fredrik Raddum (b. 1973) is a Norwegian artist working with sculpture, installation, photo-, and performance-related journeys. Educated at the National Academy of Fine Art, Oslo, and exhibiting internationally since 2001, Raddum's sculptures are at once alluring, tongue-in-cheek and challenging. He popularizes serious themes, embodying them in tragicomic animal and human figures resembling cartoon characters. Clichés and icons are twisted and recontextualised, while humour and the absurd are foregrounded in seemingly innocuous settings. Always subtle, Raddum's unique formal language and uncommon approach to medium quietly reveal hints of social critique, encouraging viewers to think beyond the initial encounter. He has exhibited at, among others, Aaros Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; National Gallery of Art, Denmark; Kistefos Museum, Norway; Pori Art Museum, Finland; and The Museum of Installation, London, in addition to multiple international solo and group exhibitions. His works can be found in public collections such as The Norwegian National Gallery, National Gallery of Art (Denmark), Norwegian Art Council, Vestas, Aker-Solutions, Norvestor Equity, Telenor and Statoil. Raddum lives and works in Oslo.



Leave Your Weapons Here
2014
wood and stone
dimensions variable



Human Excavation

2016

bronze and spray paint flocking fibre

75 x 50 x 40 cm

edition 1/5



The Nomad
2016
bronze, spray paint and cardboard
62 x 20 x 12 cm
edition 1/5



The Nomad
2016
bronze, spray paint and cardboard
58 x 16 x 10 cm
edition 1/5



The Gift
2016
bronze, paint and wood
74 x 54 x 30 cm
edition 1/5



The Gift
2016
bronze, paint and wood
73 x 35 x 20 cm
edition 1/5



The Human Condition
2011-16
bronze and wood
40 x 30 x 26 cm
edition 1/7



The Sad Ghost of Nothingness
2014
bronze
25 x 12 x 30 cm
edition 17/20



Excavation
2014
polyester and car paint
210 x 140 x 80 cm

Project Space

Sverre Bjertnæs

Sverre Bjertnæs (b. 1976, Trondheim) made his mark as a young artist working in figurative painting and drawing after attending the Norwegian Nerderum School as a teenager, later furthering his education at the Norwegian National Academy of Fine Arts in Oslo and AKI Academy of Fine Art in Enschede, Holland. In recent years, Bjertnæs has been a rising star in Norway's contemporary art scene, cultivating a strong artistic identity. He frequently works in portraiture, developing a playful tone that juxtaposes the complex relationships within the images. Bjertnæs' first solo exhibition was at the Norwegian gallery Anarchist Fraction in 2000, a natural starting point as Bjertnæs had developed a close personal and creative relationship with its director and fellow artist Bjarne Melgaard. This in turn led to *A Projective Identification*, Bjertnæs' first international solo exhibition at White Columns Gallery, New York, in 2012. Curated by Melgaard and named one of the 10 best exhibitions in New York in 2012 by the *New York Times*, the gallery walls were covered in bold colours and patterns and featured portraits of a variety of subjects, from Jesus Christ to the artist's wife. This curated style of exhibition - rooms brimming to the edge with paintings, drawings, films and wooden and bronze sculpture - has become one of Bjertnæs' trademarks.



The Black Sails
2015-16
oil on canvas
140 x 90 cm



Purple and Blue
2015-16
oil on canvas
80 x 70 cm



A Sculpture by the Sea
2015-16
oil on canvas
180 x 200 cm



My Years as a Dog
2015
bronze and oil paint
edition 4/6

KH

Kristin Hjellegjerde

533 Old York Road London
SW18 1TG
+44 (0)20 8875 0110

info@kristinhjellegjerde.com
www.kristinhjellegjerde.com