

“After Munch”

WITH

UNNI ASKELAND
MARKUS BRENDMOE
CRISPIN GURHOLT

PRIVATE VIEW 28th of June 2012
6:30 – 9:00 PM

29th of June – 28th of July 2012

ArtEco Gallery is proud to present its inaugural exhibition, *After Munch*. The exhibition offers a selection of artworks by Norwegian artists influenced by Edvard Munch. The show is inspired by the Tate Modern’s major exhibition of Munch’s work this summer, *The Modern Eye*. Next year will see the celebration of Munch’s 150th birthday, named ‘Munch Year’ in Norway.

The pride of Norwegian art, Edvard Munch travelled and exhibited extensively throughout Europe, including several exhibitions in Germany and Paris – yet he showed just once in London during his lifetime. Upon being told there was a buyer for one of his works, he excitedly asked who – and hearing that the buyer was Norwegian, he was so disappointed that he closed the whole show and even contacted the Norwegian Embassy to help him bring the work home. Today the embassy is supporting *After Munch*, continuing the tradition of bringing contemporary Norwegian art to London.

The gallery’s founder, Kristin Hjellegjerde, was born in Norway. After establishing ArtEco, a well-circulated art blog in New York City, she moved to London where she decided to make the next step and open a gallery. ArtEco Gallery hopes to be a space for Scandinavian and international artists alike to show their work. With the Tate Modern offering the ‘modern’ Munch, ArtEco invites you to view the ‘contemporary’ Munch. The research that went into the creation of the show led to securing three highly-acclaimed Norwegian artists, all showing for the first time in London, exclusively at ArtEco Gallery.

Unni Askeland was the first artist to exhibit *Munchadoptions* in 2004, at Blomqvist in Oslo. She will be representing ‘Munch Year’ in Norway in 2013 at Aasgaardstrand, probably Munch’s favourite place to live and work. Her pieces feature vibrant hues and an intense fullness of colour, with deep, extended drips of paint in several works. Askeland draws connections between her life and art, combining figural and abstract to create a selection of beautifully dark and sinister works that embody the very core of the artists – both Askeland and Munch. A key work in *After Munch* is *Captain. My Captain*, based on her father’s death, which has been shown successfully at Blaafarvevæket, a museum outside Oslo. They are on sale for the first time at ArtEco Gallery.

Markus Brendmoe has recently enjoyed great success with his October 2011 exhibition at Oslo's Stenersenmuseumet. Bursting with inspiration, he created numerous works, making it possible for *After Munch* to include pieces from that show as well as some not yet exhibited. After Edvard Munch's *The Scream* fetched 120 million USD on the 2nd of May of this year, Brendmoe was inspired to create new interpretations, and indeed one of his signature works in this exhibition is his version of *The Scream*. Fittingly, the work also references the 7/7 terrorist bombings in London. Brendmoe imbues a sense of playfulness in his art, caught between the mixture of bright and transparent colour, smooth darkness and explosive textures, and brushstrokes that highlight the presence and physicality of his process. In viewing each beautifully delicate, yet resoundingly strong, piece, a personal relationship is formed between artist, artwork, and audience.

Crispin Gurholt's art can be seen as a departure from the works of Askeland and Brendmoe, yet it forms an integral link that brings *After Munch* together. The only Norwegian representative at the Havana Biennale this May, Gurholt's art is the art of time. While Munch's work strove to capture a moment in time, Gurholt takes this idea to another level of intimate beauty. Called 'live photos', his works consist of photographing live installations – capturing a moment, a collection of actions and decisions that form an atmosphere of clarity and precision. He demonstrates an incredible mastery of detail, timing and technical skill that is rare and fascinating to observe. In his live photo *Sunday 17.45*, the participants are suspended in a space between fiction and reality, an atmosphere of tension spilling into the space of the viewer – and forming a connection between artwork and viewer that is intoxicating. We are caught under Gurholt's spell of time, beauty, and hyper-reality.

***After Munch* runs from 29th of June – 28th of July 2012
at ArtEco Gallery, London**

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