



Chris Agnew. The Mighty Grip of Fate

10 Jan–9 Feb 2014 at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London



An empty figure stands, facing us, arms outstretched. There is an air of mystery to him, for he stands half shrouded in layer upon layer of undulating fabric. He (for we presume it is a he) has the air of a martyred saint, open, presenting himself to the world. The dense etched lines that comprise the folds of what can only be parachute fabric hark back to another era; while the medium transports us to the past, the figure himself greets us, like some Icarus before his leap from the sky. His body is absent, replaced by a void of floating clouds, sky and tessellated figures, an endless view into infinity. And yet... he commands our attention. He is unmistakably present. As with all of British artist Chris Agnew's detailed works, there is a story behind the figure with which he presents us. However, it is what the figure represents, rather than who he is, or once was, that is of importance.

It is with this in mind that Kristin Hjellegjerde (Arteco) is proud to present The Mighty Grip of Fate, a solo show of Agnew's works, running from 10 January to 9 February 2014. In the



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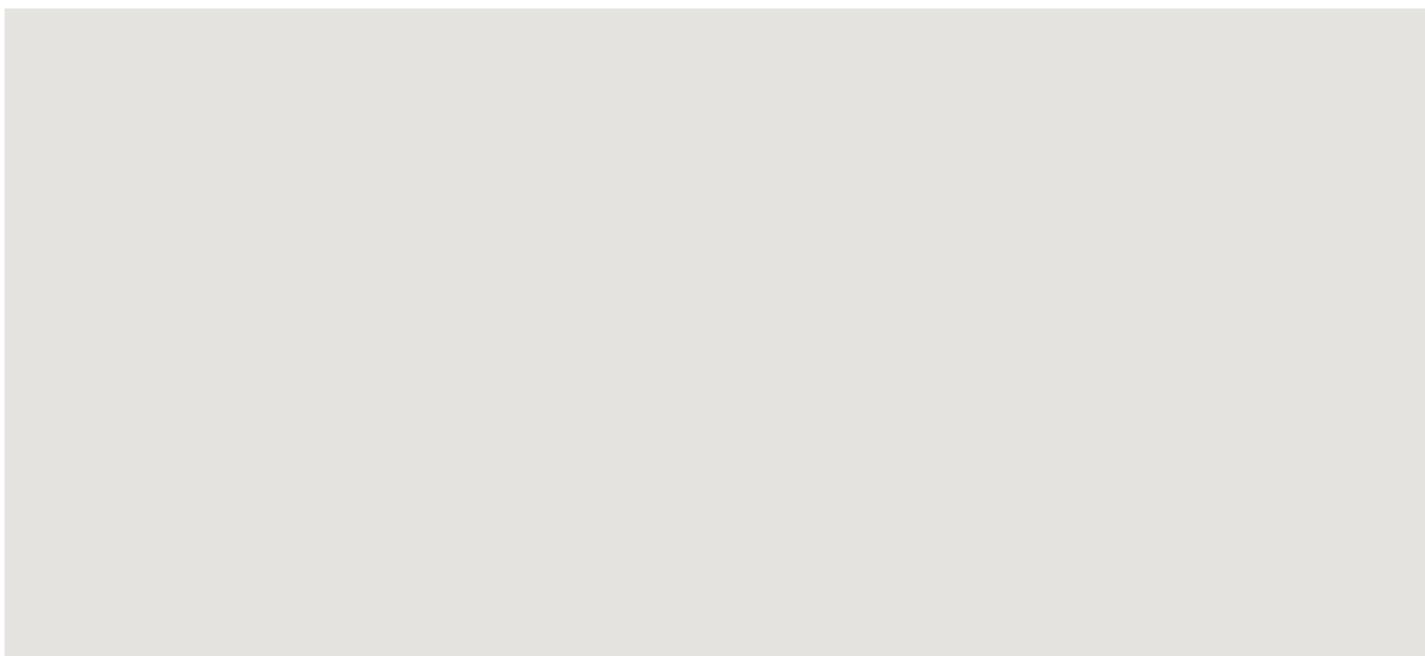
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case of *The Tailor's Dummy*, Agnew has based the work on a photograph of Franz Reichelt, an Austrian tailor who developed one of the first parachutes in Paris in 1912. His virgin flight, from the first platform of the Eiffel Tower, resulted in his death. "In order to gain the attention of the many corporations that wanted to manufacture parachutes, Reichelt decided it would be more impressive if he jumped first," explains Agnew. "His story is now just a footnote in the history of aviation, but I liked the idea of him as a contemporary saint, risking it all to grab the attention of the men with the money; an idea that resonates with a lot of people today."

Herein is the crux of Agnew's oeuvre – the construction and deconstruction of belief systems, be they political, religious, social or cultural. For the artist, it is the malleable nature of what we hold as 'truth' that fascinates him, and how the presentation of information informs our subsequent understanding of events. "The gap between what we know to be true and what we believe isn't always one and the same," he explains. 'Facts have a habit of falling into the gaps that beliefs have opened – the title of the exhibition, *The Mighty Grip of Fate*, doesn't necessarily refer to the characters in the works, but also the viewer themselves – in that the opinions and beliefs that they hold are subject to circumstances beyond their control.'...

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

533 Old York Road, Wandsworth
London SW18 1TG United Kingdom
Ph. +44 (0)20 88750110



info@kristinhjellegjerde.cominfo@kristinhjellegjerde.com

www.kristinhjellegjerde.com

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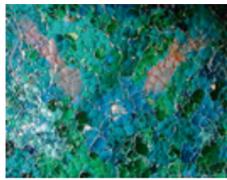
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