



Dundee Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

3 February 2010

For immediate release

Alex Frost

The Connoisseurs

Saturday 13 March - Sunday 23 May

Press view: Friday 12 March, 1pm

DCA is delighted to present the Glasgow artist's largest solo show to date, from 13 March - 23 May 2010.

The Connoisseurs presents an awkward marriage of numerous distinct references: digital technology, food science, community craft workshops, dystopian fiction and macro-economics.

The title piece for the exhibition was created during Frost's recent residency at Glenfiddich Distillery; one of the largest and most ambitious residencies in Scotland. A series of giant noses - modelled on the artist's own - suggest a flooded dystopian landscape. Initially made as floating sculptures in Glenfiddich's cooling pool, these works will be rendered static, standing like totems of refinement, pomp, scent and taste in the centre of DCA's large gallery space.

A series of drawn portraits of a group of adults all strike the same impassive pose. They are a cross-generational, international grouping of individuals (a 'blank' version of a GAP or Benetton advertising campaign).

These drawings are compressed, dithered, perforated and then painted into being. They are made using a unique technique known as 'blind drawing'. This term is part description of the process and allusion to the blank depiction of the subjects depicted and reference to the Braille-like effect of the resulting surface.

The paper is perforated from behind and then paint is brushed through these holes. This painterly seepage creates the image on what is effectively the back of the paper. A digital sensibility is paired with an analogue process.

A series of still life blind drawings parody Giorgio Morandi. In the film *La Dolce Vita*, Morandi's work was used to signify bourgeois Italian life in the 1960s. These new drawings show a selection of shop bought products that are linked by a common motif - the love heart.

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Wifi swimming pool mural, unfinished' depicts the official logo of the Wifi Alliance, implying a free-roaming selector unbound by cable connections. It is inspired by the 'outsider' environments 'The Watts' towers', (Los Angeles, California), 'Le Palais de Facteur Cheval' (near Valence, France) and 'Nek Chand's rock garden' (Chandigarh, India).

Epic in scale, these environments are all constructed by an individual within a defined locality. In the large part they have been constructed by a lone man with his wheel barrow, limited to walking distances for the scavenging of materials.

The work re-imagines these outsider environments, having been made using materials that have been sourced and bought solely from internet retailers. It mirrors the anti-social aspects of the outsider artists' work but inverts the local bias. A rampant consumerist aesthetic replaces the scavengers' aesthetic, the 'virtual shopping basket' replacing the wheel barrow.

The mural is made from a collage of ceramic tiles and aquatic imagery: resin and plastic copies of coral, sea anemones, starfish, alligators, bridges and driftwood intended for ornamental use in aquariums in addition to more familiar domestic elements: bathroom fittings and ornaments.

The exhibition also includes a collection of home baked polymer clay sculptures depicting alternatives to meat, sugar and dairy foodstuffs. The sculptures are not direct copies but doughy distortions, playfully misshapen, squeezed out of their stack-able uniformity. These substitutes make reference through text and/or image to the niche-foodstuffs that they ape. The stand-ins point to elements of a speculative future that may now exist, the 2022 of the film 'Soylent Green' (1973).

The conscious groupings of these artworks are what define the heart of this exhibition. An air of absurdity surrounds all of these objects whether they are murals that celebrate digital communication networks, reproductions of simulated meat and dairy products, drawings that don't readily reveal if they are being viewed from the front or back or beached sculptures of giant noses.

Emerging from Scotland's artist led scene in the late 1990s with projects with The Collective, Edinburgh, Glasgow's Transmission and Switchspace and Generator Projects, Dundee, Alex Frost has developed into a prominent, respected artist exhibiting internationally.

A series of cinema screening, tours, talks and workshops will accompany this exhibition, including Alex Frost in conversation with DCA Exhibitions Curator Graham Domke on March 3 just as his installation period will commence.

Ends

For more information, interviews and images please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Gallery opening times

Tuesday – Saturday 10.30am - 5.30pm

Sunday Noon – 5.30pm

Open late Thursdays until 8.30pm

Closed Monday except Dundee Public Holidays

Entry to the Gallery is free.

Information

01382 900 900

www.dca.org.uk

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Artist Biography

Born in London in 1973, Alex Frost studied fine art at Staffordshire University (BA 1995) and Glasgow School of Art (MFA 1998).

Alex's recent solo shows include: Venice Biennale 09 (Artsway Pavilion) 'Adults' (Sandra Burgel, Berlin); Milton Keynes Gallery; 'BBQ' (Artsway, Hampshire); 'Compassion Fatigue' (Sorcha Dallas, Glasgow), and 'Format Wars' (Tramway, Glasgow). Selected group shows include 'Scala Paradisi' (Schurmann, Berlin), 'Friends and Family' (Anton Kern, New York); 'To Bring Forth and Give' (Glasgow Print Studio), and the Annual Members show at Studio Voltaire, London. In 2009 Frost was short listed for the Jerwood Sculpture Prize and was selected by Artsway for the Venice Biennale and undertook the Glenfiddich residency in Dufftown, Scotland.

Following *The Connoisseurs* at DCA, Alex Frost will embark on a three-month residency in Antwerp in April.

Alex Frost is represented by Sorcha Dallas, Glasgow