

JOHN ISAACS

LET THE GOLDEN AGE BEGIN

30 May – 2 July 2009

Preview Friday 29 May 6 – 8pm

Press Release:

Museum 52 is delighted to present *Let the Golden Age Begin*, John Isaacs' fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition presents a series of new works in which Isaacs touches upon preoccupations with hope and loss, that which is fleetingly gained, and at what cost. He highlights a kind of cyclical phase of optimism and cynicism, through which both cultures and individuals pass, though never with any synchronized sense or drive.

Pool of Narcissus Weeping sits central to the installed works and offers a way into the eclectic and temporal collection of works. Referencing the early modernist language of Rauschenberg and Flavin, and yet pathetically empty of iconic status, it illuminates the framed drawing hanging on the wall beside it. The empty chair waits for the viewer, if not in body then in mind, also bearing the secret of collected butterflies glued with chewing gum to its underside, as though Isaacs wishes to re-humanise an already passed moment in time. *What Lies Before What Lies Behind*, a circular framed relief of two hands shaking is charged with the iconic power of its duplicitous use in the representation of both comradeship (in the communist era), and capitalistic power play, but beyond that for Isaacs the representation of two disembodied hands represents something far from an equal agreement, and something far from our own place and time. He presents an unrequested contract written in greed and inequality.

In the back viewing space, Isaacs screens a new film *Let the Golden Age Begin*, cut together from found wildlife documentary footage. The video, in its reuse of both image and sound, its blatant unoriginality, speaks against the avant-garde quest for the new and meditatively pulls the viewer back to a place which for many of us is by now a long lost fantasy of the natural and its disappearing status. The soundtrack lends the footage a new romanticised rhythm, and it is with a degree of shame, of longing and love, that the awareness that we ourselves are the abusers of something so innocent, traps us within the lullaby. With these pieces, as with much of Isaacs' work, there is a strong sense of the universal connection that underlies our apparent isolation from one another. Combining a sense of appealing optimism with abject pessimism, Isaacs examines our historically and culturally determined conventions, with an often humorously brutish reality.

Gallery Hours:

Wednesday-Saturday 11am – 6pm

For more information call +44 (0) 20 7366 5571