

PRESS RELEASE

PILAR CORRIAS PRESENTS

IT MEANS IT MEANS! – A DRAWN EXHIBITION BY CHARLES AVERY & TOM MORTON
AT THE MUSEUM OF ART, ONOMATOPOEIA AND PILAR CORRIAS, LONDON

20 NOVEMBER 2013 – 11 JANUARY 2014

PV: TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2013, 6–8PM



Charles Avery, *Untitled (It Means It Means; Bourgeois, Friedrich, LeWitt, Lichtenstein, Malevich, Morris, Polke, Stieglitz)* 2013 [Detail]
Pencil, ink, acrylic and gouache on paper, 171 x 226 (unframed). Photo: Claire Dorn.

'It Means It Means!' is a 'drawn group exhibition' staged in two locations simultaneously – once as a fiction, once as a fact. The first location is the Museum of Art Onomatopoeia on 'The Island', a fictional realm that has provided the backdrop to Charles Avery's artistic and philosophical investigations since 2005. The second location is Pilar Corrias gallery, London.

Curator Tom Morton has been given plans of The Island's Museum, for which he has devised a show of real works by real artists, from Antoine Watteau to Tino Sehgal, which may only be witnessed through a series of drawings made by Charles Avery and presented at Pilar Corrias. An example of what André Malraux termed a 'Musée Imaginaire', 'It Means It Means!' explores what constitutes a site for artistic/curatorial production, and the artist/curator relationship. It is an exhibition that contains an exhibition, and a series of artworks that contains a series of artworks. The real, here, is displaced into the fictional, and the fictional into the real.

'It Means It Means!' circumvents almost all of the usual processes and paraphernalia of exhibition making. This 'drawn show' does not demand loan agreements, shipping contractors, or teams of toiling technicians – all that is necessary to its creation is a list of works, supplied by the curator Tom Morton, and Charles Avery's efforts at the drawing board. If freedom from budgetary constraints means that the exhibition might conceivably contain any artwork from anywhere in the 'real' world (compare the costs of transporting, say, a large bronze sculpture across an ocean to depicting it in pencil on paper), the fact that it is staged in a fictional museum, in the capital city of a fictional territory, gives rise to further freedoms, perhaps among them the suspension of certain curatorial orthodoxies.

The exhibition's title offers a response to a question often asked of unfamiliar artworks: 'But what does it mean?' To state that 'It Means It Means!' is to point to art's primary property, the fact that it 'means' before it 'denotes X' or 'connotes Y'. Perhaps it is only when works from our own world travel to another that this property comes into focus. 'It Means It Means!' is, after all, a showcase of exotica, of foreign art made after a very foreign Enlightenment. We may ask whether the Islanders understand these works as we do, or whether they take them in a very different spirit? And what is shown at Onomatopoeia's Museum when it is not playing host to art produced far from the Island's shores?

'It Means It Means!' features many works drawn from 'our' art history that speak to the Islanders project's iconography and conceptual concerns. Accordingly, the visitor will encounter waves, clouds and air (Vija Celmins, Bridget Riley, Alfred Stieglitz); circles, spheres and portals (Roy Lichtenstein, Eva Hesse, David Hammons, and the aperture of Marcel Duchamp's 1946–66 "Etant Donnés"); squares, cubes and lines (Kazimir Malevich, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Charles Ray); pairs of lovers, friends, rivals and doubles (Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Sturtevant, Antoine Watteau); the short-circuiting of numeric and linguistic logic (Sigmar Polke, Tino Sehgal); and several instances of 'dogs in art' (Giacomo Balla, Louise Bourgeois, Francisco de Goya, Jeff Koons). In the Museum's piazza stands Barbara Hepworth's monumental *Single Form* (1961–4), temporarily 'relocated' from the United Nations Plaza, New York. Its presence in the city of Onomatopoeia may be read as a gesture of goodwill between our world and The Island, between the real and the fictive.

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Alert visitors to the exhibition will note the apparent absence, in Avery's drawings, of works by some of the artists listed as participating in 'It Means It Means!'. In the case of Art & Language's *Air Show* (1966–67) – a work that consists of nothing more than a vast column of air – this is due to the nature of the artists' chosen materials. In the case of works by Josef Beuys, and Philippe Parreno, these are, for now, visible only to the Island's inhabitants, having been installed by Morton in parts of the Museum that have yet to receive the attention's of Avery's pencil. Such are the limits, and the possibilities, of a drawn exhibition. The Islanders may amble around 'It Means It Means!' at will. The rest of us must imagine the 'missing' works existing around unseen corners, in spaces that remain to be depicted – out of shot, but not out of mind.

Charles Avery (b.1973, lives and works in London and Mull, UK) has had solo exhibitions at: GEM, Den Haag (forthcoming 2015); FRAC Ile-de-France Le Plateau Paris, Kunstverein Hanover, EX3 Florence (2010); Parasol Unit London, National Gallery of Modern Art Edinburgh, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam (2008). He represented Scotland at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007), and has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including "British Art Show 7" (2010–11), "Altermodern: Fourth Tate Triennial" (2009, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud), and the 2007 Lyon and Athens Biennales.

Tom Morton (b.1977) is a London-based curator, writer, and Contributing Editor of *frieze*. He was co-curator of the quintennial travelling exhibition "British Art Show 7" (2010–2011), and has worked as a curator at the Hayward Gallery (2008–11) and Cubitt Gallery, London (2006–7). He was co-curator of the 2008 Busan Biennale, and curated the exhibition "How to Endure" for the 2007 Athens Biennial. In late 2013, he will co-curate a survey of recent British and Polish art at the CSW Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. Morton's writing has appeared in numerous exhibition catalogues, and in journals including *frieze*, *Frog*, *Bidoun*, and *Metropolis M*.

Pilar Corrias, London is open Monday–Friday, 10 am–6pm & Saturday 11am–6pm. For further information, please contact Jessica on: +44 (0)20 7323 7000 or jessica@pilarcorrias.com