

Sam Durant
More Than 1/2 the World

15 March – 13 April 2017
1 Davies St London W1
Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6pm

Sam Durant's fourth exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ features a new series of eight wall-mounted lightbox signs in which protest slogans are translated into polemical and poetic works of art. Handwritten maxims from demonstrations and rallies have been reproduced as coloured illuminated signs – glowing panes in which Durant evokes the self-containment of Colour Field abstraction and conceptualist word art, while subverting these forms through the appropriation of personal and passionate messages. Each work operates at multiple levels, invoking contemporary political realities while employing abstract, critical and affirmative dimensions.



Over the last twenty years, Durant has mined the image archives of international protests and demonstrations, from the early twentieth century to the present, as sources for drawings and large-scale lightbox signs. In the lightboxes, hand-drawn statements are transferred from the source photographs into a format typically associated with commercial signage and advertising. Spontaneous, rapid and subjective messages are transmitted through an informational display mode; and yet the statements achieve new urgency and power from their dispassionate conveyance. Durant channels and enhances the contrarianism, humour, utopianism or challenge embedded in each handwritten slogan. The tension between emotive content and minimalist form expands the meaning of each text – opening it to different inferences and possibilities.

In line with previous lightbox signs, Durant has chosen slogans which transcend their original contexts. Each panel contains an open-ended proposition or question inscribed in graphic capitals, isolated against a field of monochrome light, and without direct reference to a time, place or cause. Each text, which began as a personal and immediate expression in a moment of struggle, now reverberates across time and history according to its immediate context. Describing his practice, the artist has stated: "The idea is that history is ongoing." In these latest examples, the 'abstractness' of the messages is also tested or reversed. *Stay* (2016), for example, chimes directly and inescapably with recent political events in the UK. In this way, the force or subtext of each work is shaped and circumscribed by its context of display: the same piece would acquire new implications in another country or architectural setting.

Sam Durant (b. 1961, Seattle) lives in Los Angeles, California. His work has been exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions including *Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions*, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis (2015); *Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions*, Washington, D.C., LACMA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2014); *La stessa storia*, MACRO, Rome (2013); *Scaffold*, Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh, and Stroom Den Haag, The Hague (2013). Major group exhibitions include *Parcours*, Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2016); Liverpool Biennial, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool (2014); *Damage Control: Art and Destruction Since 1950*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC (2013, travelling to Mudam Luxembourg and Universal Museum Joanneum / Kunsthaus Graz); *DOCUMENTA (13)*, Kassel, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (2012); *The Air We Breathe*, curated by Apsara DiQuinzio, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2011); the 2006 Busan Biennial, Korea; the 2004 Whitney Museum of American Art Biennial, New York; and the 2002 Venice Biennale, Italy.

For further information please contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7493 8611 or press@sadiecoles.com