

Murray Guy

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Matthew Higgs *Lost For Words*

27 February – 2 April 2016

Murray Guy is pleased to announce *Lost For Words*, Matthew Higgs' sixth exhibition with the gallery. Higgs has developed the exhibition in collaboration with Rita Ackermann, Yevgeniya Baras, Brian Belott, Robert Bordo, Mike Cloud, Gerasimos Floratos, Daniel Heidkamp, Clive Hodgson, Ella Kruglyanskaya, Sadie Laska, Margaret Lee, and Spencer Sweeney.

For more than twenty years Higgs' practice has considered the intersections between text and image, and language and painting. At art school in the mid-to-late 1980s Higgs studied in the painting department, where he occasionally made collaborative work with fellow student Gavin Brown. In the mid 1990s Higgs' first two 'solo' exhibitions in London were made in collaboration with the artists Peter Doig and Chris Ofili (in 1996 and 1997 respectively). In each case, Higgs juxtaposed a found text (a single sentence from a page removed from a detective novel) with painted works commissioned from Doig and Ofili. For his first show at Murray Guy in 2000, Higgs invited the artists Francis Alÿs, Paul Bloodgood, and Verne Dawson to each make a work based on a description of a fictional abstract painting that Higgs sourced in a 1960s detective novel. This collaborative approach to both art and exhibition making reverberates with Higgs' ongoing activities as an artist-curator (he is currently the Director and Chief Curator of White Columns). It was central to a recent series of four exhibitions Higgs made in collaboration with the artist and gallerist Margaret Lee (2012-13), and also in the subsequent two-person exhibitions Higgs made in dialog with Ian Wallace (2014) and Clive Hodgson (2015).

For his current exhibition at Murray Guy, Higgs invited twelve artists – all of whom have developed highly idiosyncratic approaches to painting – to each create a new work on a circular canvas support. Since 2012, Higgs has created what he calls 'Reading Paintings', monochromatic canvases to which he attaches existing publications. Intended to be 'read' – literally – by the viewer, Higgs' 'Reading Paintings' are an attempt to gently animate the rationale of the artwork and the viewing experience itself, whilst at the same time creating a vehicle for Higgs to make public his enthusiasms. In the current exhibition Higgs has attached books to each of the paintings made by the collaborating artists.

Alongside the collaborative 'Reading Paintings', Higgs is presenting a selection of his now signature framed text works, including a group of works made between 1991-92 from a series entitled 'Untitled (Hardboiled)': individual book pages removed from post-war detective novels that featured painters as characters and/or the art world as a setting. In each case Higgs erased the majority of the text leaving only specific phrases or sentences legible, each of which refers to the condition of art or to the social standing of the artist. Works from this series were originally shown in the exhibition *Enthusiasts* at Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York, in 1995.

Matthew Higgs (b.1964 Wakefield, England) has exhibited internationally since 1992. Recent solo exhibitions include Wilkinson, London (with Clive Hodgson), The Apartment, Vancouver (with Ian Wallace); MHML, The Green Gallery, Milwaukee (with Margaret Lee); Galerie Senn, Vienna (with Gedi Sibony); and Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, East Hampton, NY;. Recent group exhibitions include *The Feverish Library*, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York; *Funny*, The Flag Art Foundation, New York; *In A Room Anything Can Happen*, CCS Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; *The Living and the Dead*, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York; and *Two Years*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Higgs is a widely published writer and a prolific curator, and since November, 2004 he has been the director and chief curator of White Columns, New York.

For more information or images, please contact the gallery at +1-212-463-7372 or info@murrayguy.com.