



CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA
Jason de Haan
 Esker Foundation

The artistic practice of Calgary-based Jason de Haan eludes categorization. His work inhabits an in-between space, a space of anti-definition. His recent exhibition, "Oh for eyes! At night we dream of eyes!" spoke to an interest in exploring non-hierarchical formations of objects. Wandering through the show, pondering, viewers first encountered clusters of crystals apparently growing from speakers. Placed in a large circle, the speakers emitted specific frequencies, vibrating at a distinct thrum. In an adjacent room, a 3D-printed female figure was caught mid-arabesque, delicately sheathed in a layer of salt that covered her face and slithered down her back. In the next gallery, an abundance of ultrasonic humidifiers—oblong and squat, some refined, others made from recycled and found materials—continuously bathed a collection of fossils with a fine mist. Sets of facing mirrors

set in metal frames were arranged in a corridor. In each pair (from the ongoing series "Spirits Looking at Themselves"), one mirror is thought to be haunted by ghosts, while the other remains untouched and offers a portal of escape.

"Oh for eyes!" offered a veritable *Wunderkammer* for the modern age. de Haan has a clear interest in exploring process over end result while still paying attention to objects and materiality. In the catalogue for his exhibition "Nogwhere Bodili is Everywhere Goostly" (2014), he writes, "I am most interested...in its reverence of material richness... These often categorical boundaries... allow for questions like: what kinds of information can an object retain? Or when is an object?"

These considerations seem present when considering a work such as *Swallow All The Brains* (2014–ongoing) in which clam, snail, brachiopod, ammonite, turtle, and tortoise fossils are positioned on the spouts of ultrasonic humidifiers, each emitting steam like sea foam misting off ancient waves. The fossils are timeless, a hard shell of what once was alive, but now, with de Haan's intervention, thrust into a new time. In this state of change, the fossils offer a way to question temporal frames—they are simultaneously prehistoric, of the present in a new form, and of the future in a transformed state, carried to different parts of the world no longer as solid objects, but as particles, specks of their former selves.

de Haan's work steps outside of taxonomies, particularly when considering the hierarchical rules governing systems of classification. The world that he creates in his work marks a departure from reality, offering an alternative way of seeing and understanding objects, as well as a place in which to consider the metaphysical.

—Maeve Hanna



Left: Sabrina Fadiel, *Wisteria*, 2000. Forged and inflated steel, 52 x 18 x 24 in. From "Revival." Above: Jason de Haan, *Swallow All The Brains*, 2014–ongoing. Found fossils, humidifiers, plastic bottles, and concrete, dimensions variable. Right: Jason de Haan, *Salt Shroud* (detail), 2017. 3D polyester printed digital scan and salt, life-size.

THE HAGUE

Thom Puckey
 Stroom Den Haag

Thom Puckey's remarkable *Thorbecke monument* and "A Matter of Time," his recent, revelatory survey, firmly called attention to the intrinsic heterogeneity of his work. The monument, situated on the edge of a green space near the House of Parliament in The Hague, confronts viewers with two loosely connected scenarios. The carved marble half depicts Johan Rudolph Thorbecke, a 19th-century politician heralded as the architect of the Dutch democratic state. He sits lost in thought and, having turned away from his desk, gazes endlessly at the seat of government. The other half features a trio of contemporary office workers cast in stainless steel. Gathered around an ordinary table, they engage in deliberation. But for the height of the single female figure, who sits on the table, the plinths, which are modestly scaled and of the same size, invoke no hierarchical ordering. The subjects, moreover, are clearly counterparts, connected



by hinged doorways, though the choice of materials epitomizes differences in times and traditions.

The unanticipated juxtaposition of styles, materials, subjects, and time periods is at first disconcerting. The atypical composition comes across as lopsided or unreasonably complex, and one suspects that Puckey might have crammed too many elements into the work. The precarious placement of the furniture contributes to such an impression. Discovering that part of Thorbecke's desk and one of the table legs are lingering in the air implies a failing. Seeing Puckey's survey, however, provided



context and clarified his concerns. From Minimalist constructions made in the 1980s to more recent photographs and figurative sculptures, Puckey's work elucidates a multivalent focus uniting attributes of time and space, disequilibrium, and perceptual phenomena. The compelling tension draws viewers in. *Treachery* (2013), for example, depicts a female nude that, like *Thorbecke*, is carved out of white marble and in a potentially precari-

ous situation. But, despite the flimsiness of the mattress on which she stands and the rigidity of her body, her eyes remain firmly fixed on something beyond the viewer. Here, that was the view through the gallery window, which the lens in her right hand transmitted onto a miniature screen in her left palm. This mini-movie surprise redirects focus and injects wonder into mundane occurrences, altering our comprehension of surrounding space.



Lenses obviously hold great significance for Puckey—they could be found in about half of the survey's selections. Their presence alludes to alchemy and scientific investigation, as well as to cinema. The inclusion of a clip from Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975) emphasizes this interest. The long tracking shot, which ends almost precisely where it started, confirms how drastically situations can change even over short periods of time. Something similar occurs with *Treachery*, if one attempts to correlate the projected image with its external source. The effort, of course, ultimately proves futile, because the inspection of one component guarantees that the other will be out of view.

The hinged doorways of the *Thorbecke monument* ameliorate this state of affairs. Influenced by Duchamp's door and echoed in Puckey's *Spinoza* (1988), these doorways unite otherwise isolated spaces, imply movement from one space to another, and—by virtue of the open platform on which the monument rests—enlist viewers in the proceedings. The arrangement of the doorways also recalls the structure of books and painted diptychs, objects that not only invite viewers to flip back and forth, but that also encourage extended reading/looking. This motivates people to parse what has been set before them, to consider shared traditions and aims—society's fragile underpinnings—and how the past has informed the present and the present will shape the future. Unlike some public works, Puckey's *Thorbecke monument*, its form and content, cannot be grasped in a flash. The viewer's relationship is an ongoing one. As Jan Drentje has written: "It is no coincidence that

Above: Thom Puckey, *Thorbecke monument*, 2017. Carrara marble and stainless steel. **Left:** Thom Puckey, *Report Children's Club*, 1987. Mixed media, 217 x 80 x 284 cm.

the viewer encounters his or her mirror image on the stainless steel pedestal...This makes the viewer part of the statue's story. The ball is in the court of the viewer, as an active citizen of the state."

—John Gayer

DISPATCH

LONDON Alberto Giacometti

Tate Modern
The U.K.'s first major retrospective of Alberto Giacometti in 20 years, made possible through unparalleled access to the collection and archive of the Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti in Paris, contained more than 250 works, including some extremely fragile and rarely displayed pieces. Although Giacometti is revered for his bronzes, the exhibition showcased a number of works in plaster and clay, repositioning him as an artist with an inherently experimental approach and far-reaching proficiency in materials. Giacometti arrived in Paris in 1922 from the Italian part of Switzerland, a move that dramatically altered the course of his artistic trajectory. Forced to abandon years of academic training, he broke from traditional forms to concentrate on simplification and the formal reduction of the avant-garde, which eventually brought him into step with his contemporaries.

The first gallery presented a surging crowd of more than 20 busts and heads, many representing Giacometti's intimates and associates. This selection offered an animated prologue to the extraordinary variety of his oeuvre, spanning the period 1917–65 and encompassing everything from the traditionally rendered images of his youth to the flattened tautness of his maturity. Portraits of those he held dear—his parents, brother Diego, wife Annette—appeared alongside depictions of acquaintances. A painted plaster bust of Flora Mayo shows a crudely