

## Press Release

**Robert Orchardson**

*Endless façade*

**23 February – 25 April 2011**

Ikon presents the first European museum exhibition of works by Robert Orchardson (born Glasgow 1976, based in London), an artist who makes sculptures inspired by science fiction and futuristic design.

Using low-tech materials such as wood and resin, Orchardson is unashamedly nostalgic for modernist idealism, appropriating the styles that defined it as he explores the nature of objects when utility has been postponed. He asserts models and prototypes as carriers for ideas, conveying utopian attitudes as they develop into something beyond themselves. A sense of this possibility, he believes, is inherent in stage sets, where there is a tension between the here and now: the material presence of the set itself – obviously an artificial construction – and the ‘other’ place for which it is a substitute within the context of the play.

For Ikon, Orchardson produces *Endless façade* (2011), an ambitious new installation that partially revisits the sets designed by Isamu Noguchi in 1955 for a Royal Shakespeare Company production of *King Lear*. Noguchi aspired to an other-worldly feeling, ‘free of historical or decorative associations’ where abstract, mobile forms created a shifting landscape against which the play unfolded. His designs for the RSC were, however, met with damning criticism, deemed as outlandish and unsympathetic to the theatrical production. Orchardson provides an opportunity to consider the designs again, grasping the optimism and eventual redundancy they embodied.

*Endless façade* encompasses the gallery space. Huge monochrome wall constructions create a jigsaw of interlocking triangular shapes, referencing the unifying grey of Noguchi’s design. These function as a backdrop for a series of highly-coloured prop-like forms, resembling the amorphous motifs that feature in paintings by the surrealist Yves Tanguy. The gallery becomes an immersive environment tense with competing implications: potential versus redundancy, abstraction versus figuration, the immediate present as opposed to somewhere else.





Also included in this installation is an earlier piece, *The future is certain, give us time to work it out* (2009). Comprising two large-scale aluminium screens, the geometric pattern of their complex triangular forms is foiled by shadows cast on the gallery walls. Creating new space, akin to a quasi-modernist room divider, this artwork mediates our view of others in the exhibition, creating a staged space in which viewers assume the position of actors. The work provides the key to Orchardson's artistic proposition.

The exhibition is in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver. The accompanying catalogue will be the first publication devoted entirely to the work of Robert Orchardson.

**Ends.**


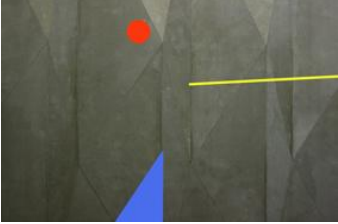
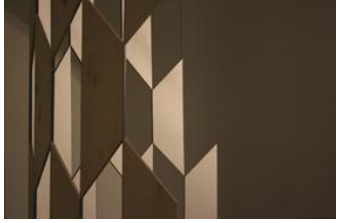

#### **Note to Editors:**

1. Press Preview, Tuesday 22 February 2010, 12-8pm
2. A selection of images is shown below
3. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Free entry.
4. Ikon Gallery is a registered charity and receives core funding from Birmingham City Council and Arts Council West Midlands. Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered address: 1 Oozells Square, Birmingham B1 2HS.
5. For more information and images please contact Helen Stallard, Press and PR Consultant, on 0774 033 9604 or [h.stallard@ikon-gallery.co.uk](mailto:h.stallard@ikon-gallery.co.uk)

1.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>Endless façade</i> (2011) (detail)</p> <p>Cement board, plastic found objects</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>
2.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>The future is certain, give us time to work it out</i> (2009) (detail)</p> <p>Aluminium</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>
3.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>Endless façade</i> (2011) (detail)</p> <p>Cement board, oak and felt</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>
4.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>Endless façade</i> (2011) (detail)</p> <p>Cement board and cast resin</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>

# IKON

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WEBSITE. [www.ikon-gallery.co.uk](http://www.ikon-gallery.co.uk)  
Ikon Gallery is a registered charity no. 528892

5.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>Edge of the Superstructure</i> (2006)</p> <p>Sapell wood and spray-painted MDF</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>
6.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>Untitled</i> (2011)</p> <p>Giclee print, edition of 50</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>
7.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>Melnikov</i> (2007) (detail)</p> <p>Birch plywood, felt, brass and spray-paint</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>
8.		<p>Robert Orchardson, <i>Melnikov</i> (2007) (detail)</p> <p>Birch plywood, felt, brass and spray-paint</p> <p>Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London</p>