

Bedwyr Williams **My Bad** 16 May – 8 July 2012

Ikon and Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in partnership with Mission Gallery, Swansea, present a new exhibition by Bedwyr Williams (b. 1974, St Asaph, Wales), his most comprehensive show to date.

Williams observes the world with a sharp eye and wry humour. His work includes a wide range of media, including performance, sculpture, painting and photography. Drawing on his own personal narratives and family histories - from school days in a North Wales farming community to his experience as artist-in-residence - Williams has become known for sculpture and performance work reflecting on rural life, loss, memory and the folly of ambition. Through the flamboyant costumes of his multiple artistic personae, we catch a glimpse of self-revelation, a command of cultural and art-world mythology, as well as a gently sardonic reflection on the human condition.

My Bad is comprised of entirely newly commissioned installation and sculptural pieces, marking a departure from the artist's previous concerns with Wales and 'Welshness'. Ikon's entrance will be transformed with piles of sandbags and taped-up windows, invoking a moment of bombardment or a wartime siege, a sly manifestation of the occasional experience of arts organisations (*Ikon Under Siege*, 2012). At the top of the second-floor stairs, visitors will find an upturned *Sentry Box* (2012), at once candy-striped, militaristic and vaguely sinister. Further suggestions of disruption and inversion await visitors inside the exhibition, such as a precariously balanced lamp post tearing through a pavement awning (*The Heron*, 2012), or an exploded kiln with shards of pots scattered about (*Shitrunes*, 2012). As is typical of Williams' work, these images of disaster are shot through with humour - two electric toothbrushes will sing a duet by Schumann - giving us the sense that both art and life are most true when the best laid plans go awry.

Venturing further into the exhibition, viewers will encounter *Stevenson Screen* (2012), such as those housing meteorological instruments. The eponymous inventor of the box was Thomas Louis Stevenson, father of writer Robert Louis Stevenson, who largely disapproved of his son's chosen occupation. Inside the box visitors will hear an audio piece suggesting the muffled groans of Dr. Jekyll transforming into Mr Hyde. Next to the Stevenson screen, a vitrine houses *Square Wig* (2012), a wig made for a completely square head. High definition video work *The Falls* (2012) portrays a waterfall with pixels the size of coasters. A flickering abstraction from close up, it resolves as an image only from afar.

Performance plays a significant part of this exhibition. For Ikon, Williams has devised an event in a Birmingham pub where he takes his place in a lineup of comedians.

My Bad is a collaboration between Ikon and Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, in partnership with Mission Gallery. It is supported by The Henry Moore Foundation and the Arts Council of Wales. A publication and limited edition accompany this exhibition.

My Bad Comedy

Tuesday 15 May, 9-11pm

The Victoria, 48 John Bright Street, Birmingham B1 1BN

For ticketing details, call Ikon on 0121 248 0780.

My Bad tours to Mission Gallery, Swansea from 17 November 2012 – 14 January 2013. Glynn Vivian Art Gallery is currently closed for redevelopment and this project is part of the gallery's Offsite Programme.

Ends.

Note to Editors:

1. A selection of images is shown below.
2. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Admission is free.
3. Ikon Gallery is a registered charity and receives core funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered address: 1 Oozells Square, Birmingham B1 2HS.
4. Glynn Vivian Art Gallery is part of the City and County of Swansea, supported by the Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government.
5. For more information, high-res images and to arrange an interview with the curator please contact Helen Stallard on 0774 033 9604 or email h.stallard@ikon-gallery.co.uk



Bedwyr Williams
The Hill Farmer (2011)
Photograph

Courtesy the artist



Bedwyr Williams
BBQ (2011)

Courtesy the artist