

Exhibition Guide

4 February – 19 April 2015

AK Dolven

please return

First Floor Galleries and Tower Room

A K Dolven (b. 1953) is one of Norway's most prominent artists. She uses a variety of media, including painting, installation, film and sound to convey her interest in the symbolic and emotional potential of the natural world, and our relationship with it. For this exhibition she also juxtaposes her work with small landscapes by renowned nineteenth century Norwegian painter Peder Balke (1804–1887), a key influence who was similarly concerned with the representation of sublime forces.

Dolven studied in Paris and Oslo, making her debut in 1983 with an exhibition in Tromsø, Norway, before moving to Berlin in 1987 and living through the years that witnessed the fall of the Berlin wall. She now divides her time between London and her home in the Lofoten Islands, northern Norway.

In *selfportrait Berlin February 1989 – Lofoten August 2009* (2010), an 8mm film on video, we see the artist re-visiting a moment in her own lifetime. The original footage, shot in West Berlin from Dolven's apartment overlooking the river Spree in East Berlin, is a naked self-portrait made whilst being watched by East German border patrols. An out of focus close-up camera is turned around the artist's waist until the film runs out. Twenty years later, in August 2009, Dolven performed the same action, this time on a mountain top facing the north in Lofoten, late at night in the season when the sun never sets. "The world is turning, and the body is still" says Dolven.

vertical on my own (2011), shot on 16 mm film, shows the artist's shadow against a stark white snowscape but does not reveal the figure itself. It exemplifies

Dolven's ongoing interest in vertical and horizontal orientations. "To me, the vertical symbolises that which does not endure, such as human beings and architecture. The horizontal embodies the eternal, expressed in the landscape".

Dolven has explored white painting since the late 1980s and talks about the importance of white surfaces as "an emptiness that offers possibilities". The film *when I discovered I wanted to live really long* (2013), also shot in 16mm, literally reflects her fascination with the white light of the arctic landscape, positioned as it is at the end of a corridor formed by two long walls finished in white gloss paint. Her performance and the quality of the footage are influenced by the extreme arctic conditions. The bleached scenario captures the nervous movements of a freezing body, its rhythm taken from Henry Purcell's *Cold Genius*, an aria in his opera *King Arthur*: "Let me, let me freeze again to death".

Dolven's exhibition concludes with the poignant *please return* (2014) which visitors can access only by stairs to the Tower Room. This journey resembles the artist's arduous climb to the top of a mountain in Lofoten to make her exhortation, "Come!"

The exhibition coincides with a new publication, *A K Dolven: please return*, published by Art / Books, available in Ikon Shop.

Associated Events

Peder Balke – Illustrated Talk

Friday 20 February, 6.30–8pm – FREE

This illustrated talk, presented by Knut Ljogodt, Director of Northern Norway Art Museum, explores the extraordinary landscapes of nineteenth century painter Peder Balke, whose work has inspired contemporary artist A K Dolven. Places are free but should be booked. Please visit www.ikon-gallery.org to book online or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.

Artist's Talk – A K Dolven

Tuesday 17 March, 7.30-9pm – FREE

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

University of Birmingham

Birmingham B15 2TS

A rare opportunity to hear artist A K Dolven talk about her work. Hosted by The Barber Institute, this event begins with a 15 minute performance of vinyl sound piece *JA, As Long As I Can* (2014), created by Dolven and poet John Giorno. Places are free but should be booked. Visit www.ikon-gallery.org to book online or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708. Part of the University of Birmingham's Arts and Science Festival (16–22 March). www.birmingham.ac.uk/artsandsciencefestival

Nástio Mosquito

DAILY LOVEMAKING

Second Floor Galleries

Nástio Mosquito (b. 1981) is a multimedia and performance artist whose work often plays off cultural stereotypes, featuring himself as a central figure in order to problematise his own identity as well as that of his audience.

Arising from his earlier career in broadcasting, Mosquito's work is beyond easy categorisation. His first solo exhibition, *DAILY LOVEMAKING* employs the language of popular culture, music and news imagery to articulate tensions that exist in politics, contemporary life, philosophy, curatorial practice and the global art market.

Mosquito's alter ego Nástia makes regular appearances in his work and offers a contradictory portrait of the artist, arrogant and cynical, with a fake Russian accent, thereby suggesting a constant state of ambivalence. The artist describes this duality and his alternative identity as "a way to create space ... to provoke you to see things in a different way". Nástia, a monstrous product of the Cold War, looms large in the exhibition. A circular projection suspended just above the floor of the middle gallery is a platform for *Nástia's Manifesto* (2008), a litany of strange conclusions based on his key idea "be Hypocritical, Ironic and Do Not Give a Fuck".

3 Continents (2010) sees Mosquito confidently deliver three speeches on Europe, America and Africa, addressing them with improvised maps behind him. Filmed in public on the street, the result is funny, transgressive and politically incorrect. His understanding that "Only when you are available to be uncomfortable can you experience something new" is brought to bear in such

a work. Likewise, *Fuck Africa Remix* (2015) brings a music video sensibility to a pseudo political lecture by Nástia. A montage of TV news imagery makes reference to politics, globalisation, the world economy and popular culture and is bluntly summarised by him when he says "I bought Europe, I bought America ... Fuck Africa".

Acts (2012), a series of large film projections with sound by Nativicious (Nástio Mosquito with Vic Pereiró), sees the artist performing covers of popular songs, including *I Shot the Sheriff* and *Purple Rain* in silhouette, combined with monologues in Portuguese and distorted digital audio and visual effects. The use of colour and the confident attitude that pervades this work is in stark contrast with the stripped back rawness of *I am Naked* (2005), one of Mosquito's earliest works.

The final room contains *Frozen War* (2010) a film installation that recreates the scene as if after a fight in a press room with scattered chairs and papers. It soon becomes apparent that it is Nástia delivering the press conference speech, "Be ready to kill or be killed, be ready to hate or be hated ... We are sons of the Cold War ... this is our Frozen War". The language is deliberately provocative, providing further evidence of the artist's fascination with rhetoric, as he explains, "I love language, I love words to convey rhythm, deconstruction ... I will use everything at my disposal".

Robert Groves

Golden Years

Ikon Reception, Ground Floor

On 5 April 1965 Ikon opened its doors to the public for the first time in the BullRing shopping precinct. Now to celebrate the gallery's fiftieth anniversary, there will be a constellation of small golden paintings (c. 1965) by founding artist Robert Groves in Ikon's reception area.

Caroline Devine

Poetics of (Outer) Space

Off-site installation

18–22 March 2015, 12–5pm

Perrott's Folly

**Waterworks Road, Edgbaston,
Birmingham B16 9AL**

Entry to Perrott's Folly is free and it is located 20 minutes walk from Ikon and 5 minutes from Hagley Road. Please note that it is only accessible via a steep spiral staircase.

Ikon returns to Birmingham's historic landmark Perrott's Folly, transforming this eighteenth century tower with a multi-channel sound installation by artist Caroline Devine. This piece explores the natural acoustic resonances of stars and the orbits of newly discovered exoplanets.

Associated Event

Artist's Talk – Caroline Devine

Thursday 19 March, 5–7.30pm – FREE

Join artist Caroline Devine as she discusses her long term residency and collaboration with the Solar and Stellar Physics Group at the University of Birmingham. Chaired by Professor Bill Chaplin, School of Physics and Astronomy, this talk is part of the University of Birmingham's Arts and Science Festival. The event begins at Ikon, with a 20 minute walk to Devine's installation, *Poetics of (Outer) Space*, at Perrott's Folly. Places are free but should be booked. Please visit www.ikon-gallery.org to book online or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.

Visit the Resource Room where you can find a selection of books, audio and film.

Stay in touch

Subscribe to our e-bulletin at www.ikon-gallery.org and find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Ikon Gallery

Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS

0121 248 0708

www.ikon-gallery.org

Printed on recycled paper.
Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon.
Registered charity no. 528892.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

 **Birmingham City Council**

