

ANDERSEN'S CONTEMPORARY

Press Release

ULRIK HELTOFT

A PART II

21 AUGUST - 25 SEPTEMBER 2010

It is a great pleasure for Andersen's Contemporary, to present Ulrik Heltoft's first solo exhibition in the gallery. The exhibition *A Part II* continues Ulrik Heltoft's by now well-known, original yet subtle universe, and consists of a new video work, and a series of new photographs.

The central work in the exhibition is the first part of the planned video trilogy *1848/1954/2060*. It takes place in a desolate but magnificent mountain and desert landscape. The year is 1848, just before the breakout of the California gold rush. Unfortunately, it is also nineteen years before Alfred Nobel invents and takes out patent on dynamite. Therefore the lone gold-digger, played by Ulrik Heltoft himself, must dig out the mine by hand. Deprived of chronological coherence the film switches between scenes showing the hopeful and energetic gold-digger, when beginning his insane one-mans-work, and scenes showing a tired and disillusioned man, who although weakened continues his seemingly hopeless project. In tableau-like scenes a fragmented and minimal narrative unfolds; a narrative that on a concrete level is about one man's specific physical project and all the hopes, fantasies, and dreams that are motivating this project. On a more abstract level however, the work examines the uncontrollable dream and the pursuit to live it out. Situations where intuition and faith are the sole anchor in an infinite space and where chance inevitably influences phenomenon like potential, success and destiny. With a single chop the pickaxe may just open a vein to a new, fantastic world.

The work *24k* consist of 9 unique large format Polaroid photos. In this work Heltoft has photographed sheets of gold leaf, so that the porous material appears in an infinite colour range of exclusively black and dark structures. Only where the gold leaf folds, in the places where the gold leaf reflects in itself, one can sense a faint golden glow.

The large photography *Old Mine* shows the entrance to an abandoned gold mine in California. While pebbles and the mountains' rock structure appear in almost palpable clarity, the gaze is lost in the impenetrable darkness of the deep, dark shaft, where both light and the recognizable world disappear.

Heltoft's works are often highly composed and follows a very rigorous choreography. Formally stringent and technically perfect works characterizes his practice, but often a seemingly insignificant detail suggests that there is "something else" at stake. A minimal displacement or nuance in the work creates a tension between the planned and predictable and the random and unpredictable.

Ulrik Heltoft (b. 1973) is educated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts from 1995 to 1999 and from Yale University from 1999 to 2001. Along with his artistic practice, he works as associate professor of photography at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and has previously had solo exhibitions at Kirkhoff Contemporary Art, Raucci e Santa Maria in Naples and Wilfried Lenz in Rotterdam. Moreover, his works has been shown at Participants Inc. in New York and screenings include New Museum and Anthology Film Archive in New York and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.

For further information and press photos please contact the gallery.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Danish Arts Council