

Red Dog, Black Wolf. Will You Remember Your Name?

Rae Hicks and Charles Sandford

Curated by Isabel Dexter

14 August – 5 September 2015

Artist talk: Thursday 27th August 2015, 19:00-20:30

The French phrase 'entre le chien et le loup' (between dog and wolf) describes a moment during dusk, before dark, where one cannot distinguish between a dog and a wolf. It expresses the ambiguity between the familiar and the comfortable, versus the unknown and the dangerous. Between the domestic and the wild, the living and the dead. It is a liminal state of in-betweenness; that uncertain, alluring threshold between hope and fear.

For *Red Dog, Black Wolf. Will You Remember Your Name?* the gallery has been subsumed by a constellation of works by London-based artists Rae Hicks and Charles Sandford. Through a series of interventions the gallery is transformed into a semi-domestic, eerie interior populated by objects, which span painting, sculpture, installation and performance. These objects employ recognisable forms and shapes, which enable them to simultaneously retain their subjective autonomy as artworks, whilst at the same time act as placeholders for domestic motifs, creating an uncanny impression of double identities jostling for attention.

Whilst holding their position in the room, these objects are themselves aesthetic explorations of the forms which they impersonate. Rae Hicks's *Lux* (2015) lapses from a configuration of individually recognisable forms into an inexplicable collage arrangement. Behind a dark red curtain the faint pattering of invisible hands moves the velvet, startlingly violent and seductive, in Charles Sandford's *Rape Scene* (2015). Meanwhile, in *Life and How To Live It* (2015) the monochrome books on a bookshelf turn out to be merely two-dimensional, painted placards of themselves. Outside the gallery, an empty funeral hearse is parked, waiting. A man dressed in black slowly polishes the hearse, patiently expecting his next fare.

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Rather than insisting on a particular response to itself, *Red Dog, Black Wolf. Will You Remember Your Name?* invites the participants of the space to both inhabit and be inhabited by the works. In this manner the gallery mirrors the alchemical effects of twilight, becoming a site of collective and unexpected potential meaning-making and meaning-breaking.

Being neither 'known' nor 'unknown', these maybe dog, maybe wolf objects begin to beg the question are we in a gallery space in Fitzrovia or have we, rather like Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, slipped down a rabbit hole and found ourselves in an alternative space where social conventions are inverted and the familiar becomes the unfamiliar?

Red dog. Black wolf.

It started as one thing. Then it became another; the way the sea curls and turns, feline, stretching out languorously and then with a roll, a flick of tail, devours and kills like it's only a game. It is only a game. One you're playing with yourself. But you don't know the rules yet, do you? They started as one thing, then they became another. Like you. Eat me. Drink me. Bite me. Oh wolf, what big teeth you have.

All the better to kiss you with, my dear.

Will you remember your name?

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RAE HICKS

Rae Hicks studied BA Fine Art at Goldsmiths, graduating in 2012, including a year at the HFBK Hamburg. Working mostly in painting, he then makes attempts at situating these works in semi-theatrical installations as well as constructing the actual environments themselves. His paintings make reference to the habit in contemporary design of deliberately confusing signifiers and meanings in order to siphon positive association upon demand. Hicks has taken part in numerous group shows throughout the UK and Germany, which twice included the John Moores painting prize, as well as *Demimonde* at Amberwood house, organised by Slate Projects. He won the John Moores Painting Prize (runner up) in September 2014 and his inaugural solo show *Fast Dream* was held at Canal projects in London in March 2015. His works are held in numerous private collections and he is currently showing two paintings in the Royal Academy summer exhibition.

www.raehicks.com

CHARLES SANDFORD

Charles Sandford graduated from BA Fine Art at Kingston in 2011 and is currently studying for an MA at RADA, London. His works most often take the form of installation-sculpture. They employ recognisably domestic forms, which are re-set as uncanny through various evasive techniques, such as interruptive performance and passive intrusions. He has since shown throughout London and the UK, including in self-curated group shows, such as *Magnolia Cube* in 2013. Charles works in a variety of mediums, including sculpture, photography, performance and installation, which interrogate subject/object relationships and place the audience as the central character.

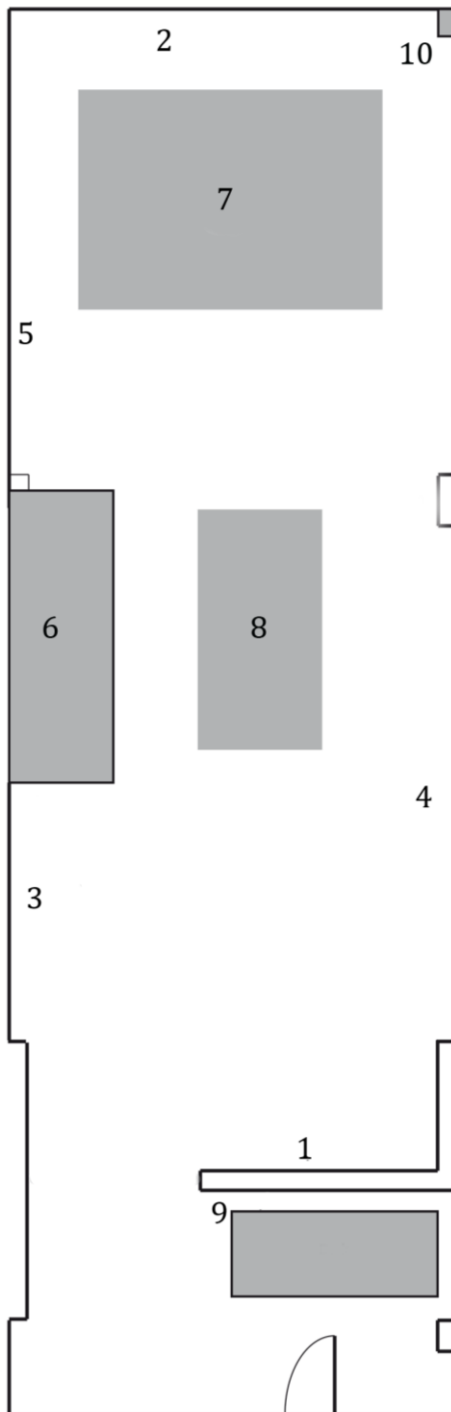
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ISABEL DEXTER

Writer and curator Isabel Dexter is on the MFA Curating programme at Goldsmiths, having curated various group shows in London and Paris. A writer and journalist, she was a former staff writer at The Times Magazine and the Paris stringer for Conde Nast Traveller. Isabel currently freelances for The Times, Marie Claire, The Independent, Vogue and The Guardian in addition to undertaking curatorial projects worldwide.

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1. Rae Hicks, *Lux*, 2015, oil on canvas, 140 x 160 cm
2. Rae Hicks, *Finger Painting*, 2015, oil on canvas, 184 x 160 cm
3. Rae Hicks, *Why Don't We Just...* 2015, oil on canvas, 145 x 175 cm
4. Rae Hicks, *What I Have To Go Through*, 2015, oil on canvas, 200 x 180 cm
5. Rae Hicks, *Penal Landscape*, 2015, oil on canvas, 140 x 170 cm
6. Rae Hicks, *Life And How To Live It*, 2015, oil on canvas, shelf, dimensions variable
7. Rae Hicks and Charles Sandford, *Ties The Room Together*, 2015, mixed media, 300 x 300 cm
8. Charles Sandford, *Harpo's Bed*, 2014, mixed media, 200 x 90 cm
9. Charles Sandford, *The Undergrowth*, 2015, photograph, 45 x 40 cm
10. Charles Sandford, *Rape Scene*, 2015, mixed media (kinetic), 190 x 150 cm

Opening night performance

Charles Sandford, *Remember That You Will Die*, 2015, performance

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