

DENE LEIGH
AGNOSIA

Nov 5 – Dec 17, 2016

BAERT GALLERY presents AGNOSIA, an exhibition of new and recent work by Dene Leigh. The exhibition is Leigh's first solo show with the gallery.

This exhibition features a cohesive assemblage of drawings on found paper, together with paintings and sculptures that explore the neurological disorder agnosia; a condition that struck Leigh's grandfather late in life after a stroke. Agnosia is where the ability of the sufferer to interpret sensations and to recognise information effortlessly is impaired through brain damage.

Leigh works in a range of mediums, investigating different aspects of the sufferer's difficulties. His fascination with collecting and hoarding found objects influences his figurative and abstract imagery, which combines elements from antiquity to present-day.

In the series of drawings, Leigh investigates aphasia, through the medium of found ephemera. The difficulties of people with aphasia can range from occasional trouble finding and understanding words, to losing the ability to read, write or speak coherently. The repetition of geometrical shapes that obscure the text makes the letters illegible, in a similar way to aphasia impairing the ability to define language.

People suffering from agnosia often struggle with recognition of faces and other imagery. Within his paintings Leigh offers an abstracted image in order to illustrate the effect that agnosia has on specific memories. We are presented with an experience of having an image, but not having enough legible words or physiognomies to describe or understand it.

The sculptures complete Leigh's depiction of the disruption of the senses ensued by the objects presented on canvas. These unfamiliar objects were created using a myriad of items: some found, some collected and all reassembled by Leigh. These objects have also been gathered from the artist's personal possessions; displaying what the artist refers to as physical but incomplete memories of his childhood. Combined in this way they represent an object that the artist need not, or cannot give a specific name to. These works can only be compared to a memory of other objects, which are both familiar and alien to the viewer. Therefore, the audience is invited to justify his or her own unique interpretation of the artwork, but is left unable to confidently name the object itself or its function.

Leigh's work addresses questions about the fragility and impermanence of the human memory through its exploration of the neurological impediments that his grandfather faced. In an effort to understand and deconstruct this experience: Leigh constructs artworks that prohibit the viewer from identifying information. Encouraged by our natural need to classify, the viewer is enticed to examine what each item is. Each piece is a part of the fragmented puzzle giving an insight into the mind of another.

Dene Leigh holds a BA (hons) in Fine Art Painting from Wimbledon College of Arts. He was shortlisted for the prestigious Young Masters Art Prize in 2014 and shortlisted for the Clyde and Co Awards in 2012. The artist lives and works in London.

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