

# WILF SPELLER

## **I WENT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS LOUSY T-SHIRT, 2014**

Acrylic on Cotton, Women's XL

As the title suggests this work is intended as a playful remark on the clash between high and low culture but at the same time aims to comment on the commodification of art, most explicitly the creation of the artist as author and ultimately as a brand. The T-shirt is presented nailed to the wall mimicking the crucifixion pose, a playful nod to crucifixion iconography in Western Art, a cornerstone of many 'great artist's' oeuvres. The icon is also a statement on the popular fantasy of the great male artist as martyr for their work. Van Gogh's genius status is spun from his romanticised madness and eventual suicide – author and oeuvre intrinsically bound – this final act cemented his status, highly increasing his fame and subsequently his value as an artist/commodity.

# JAN STRADTMANN

## **BELGRAVIA (2/6), 2008/2012**

Archival Pigment Print, 82x75cm

Both Porsche as a prestige brand and Belgravia, as one of the richest parts, of London are synonymous with high living standards, financial power, potency and strength. The typological series picks up on a recurring theme on the streets of Belgravia. Each of the six photos shows a Porsche parked in front of an upper class home with the same fences and doorways. The serial representation of the scene undermines the distinctiveness that usually comes with the possession of a Porsche.

Instead of displaying the individuality and taste of its owner, it here dissolves into a reiterated sign emptied out of its original meaning. Photographing the Porsches by night turns them into relic-like pieces integrated in the setting of antequely adorned columns and spearhead-fences which recall better times.

# PAULA GORTÁZAR

## **WINTER HOLIDAYS, 2011-2013**

Lambda Print, 30x30cm

Winter Holidays depicts a series of abandoned objects and out-of-order structures found in Pas de la Casa; a small, overpopulated town, situated in the Andorran Pyrenees between Spain and France. Hosting over five million tourists every year, this winter resort constitutes yet another example of the many natural paradises colonised by humans for recreational purposes.

Since 2011, the artist has travelled to this region during the peak season and photographed its changing landscape. While huge investments are made every year in the construction of new chair lifts and modern residential areas, certain structures no longer in use are left in the mountains due to their high removal costs. Meanwhile, the environmental damage caused throughout this “protected” mountain chain, threatens the survival of thousands of species inhabiting those peaks.

# BASIL AL-RAWI

## **FAÇADE (2/14), 2012**

C-Type Print, 60x50cm

The Irish property bubble burst in 2008 precipitating the ongoing economic crisis in the country. As credit dried up and developers went into receivership, developments were abandoned at various stages of completion. Empty housing estates, skeletal buildings and zoned wastelands now mar the landscape.

Many sites on the periphery of towns and cities remain encircled by hoardings, some covered in hyperreal imagery and grandiose slogans which belie the reality. These fences obstruct our view and act like screens, projecting a fictional past over the present actuality. They have become part of the topography of the country, relics of an illusionary age.

# MARIA TZILI

## **LIFE USER MANUAL, 2014**

Archival Pigment Print, 33x50cm

A user manual is a set of instructions that explain how to install and operate a device, usually technical. In this project, the term is used to mimic the ways in which dominant systems of signs in late capitalist societies have become instructive of a life-style promising happiness, health, safety and success.

This project is a series of young people's portraits at a stage in their lives where certain choices are instrumental to their future. Their portraits are combined with common advertising slogans promising change. The repetitive gestures of four diptychs echo the endless proliferation of desires to consume life as instructed and yet always unfulfilled.

# WILLIAM ECKERSLEY

## **24HR NEWS, 2014**

Archival Pigment Print, 125x95cm

Focusing on Sky News, the piece explores the schism between journalism and advertising's respective presentations of the world both in terms of their visual and linguistic messages. Whilst Sky news programmes imply a serious aesthetic and an "informative" practice of communicating news, advertising play out fantasies of a very different reality. We sense this schizophrenia temporally when watching such channels, but my intention was to initiate a different consideration by exposing these visual and linguistic messages atemporally. The result is a captioned portrait from each hour of February 21st 2014, presented as a typological grid of this duality.

# XIAOBO FU

## **PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH, 2014**

Archival Pigment Print, 30x30cm

‘Museums give us a history: a history that reflects the priorities of those who keep and own the museums.’

Donald Horne, **The Great Museum**

When we visit historical museum collections, we usually encounter a sign politely reading ‘Please Do Not Touch’. Apart from its museological functions to preserve, protect and ensure the longevity of the historical object on display, ‘Please Do Not Touch’ also signifies its ownership, be it by purchase, forcible appropriation or conquest. The historical sculptures, objects and artefacts acquire new sets of meanings that embody the power of the institutions that own them. This project comments on debates surrounding ownership and institutional power. ‘Please Do Not Touch’ re-appropriates some of the British Museum’s acquisitions through photography and therefore re-inscribes them with new historical trajectories both as photographic images and as artworks displayed outside the museum.