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William Hunt

Playing The Goat

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Ibid. Los Angeles is pleased to present a solo show by British artist, William Hunt, entitled *Playing The Goat*. Central to Hunt's practice is a desire to question the conventions and convictions of public performance as ritual. Awkward situations arise out of a highly constructed environment to reveal the artist's tragicomic public persona, as he must live up to the expectations of his audience without any certainty of success. The result is equally heroic and humble. In recent years William Hunt has presented a number of elaborate scenarios for galleries in which he performs music in physically restrictive conditions; often the residue of these actions are left as a sculptural installation. He additionally stages works outside the gallery context, performed to be documented and exhibited as video installations and photographs. Presenting himself both as heroic protagonist and foolish prankster, Hunt investigates the communication of human emotion and its relationship to the creative act.

In *Still yourself and calm your boots*, a new work commissioned by PEER, London, Hunt drives a car at speed into a concrete barrier, out of which he then emerges to continue performing a song about the fragile nature of interpersonal relationships extending also to that between the performer and viewer. Who asks what from whom and the demands we make from one another. The action has been filmed from within and outside the vehicle using multiple styles, from prosumer extreme sports cameras to more analytical high speed devices. The editing stretches the brief moments of the car's approach and impact, over which an emotive multi-layered soundscape has been laid. As viewers to this otherwise irrational act, we are entirely drawn into the immersive cinematic experience. Hunt's delivery of the song, made all the more desperate as a result of his physical pain from the crash, accentuates his absurd struggle against the tragicomic misfortune of his own creation.

Also shown are 9 framed works made from video stills of the extreme deceleration of the car from *Still yourself...* The video frames have been sliced and spliced and are re-combining one 2000th of a second five times to extend the moment. A moment when Hunt, in order to endure the impact, had to remain focused, as the title demands *still yourself...*, on the actions that would ensure he suffered no bodily harm. On another wall, *A Gesture You Can't Help but Make*, 2010, includes six prints from a performance at Villa Reykjavik, Iceland. Hunt is seen atop a ladder off the coast of Reykjavik at Aegissida while performing with his guitar. At the end of the performance, the artist sets himself on fire and jumps into the water extinguishing the flames. As with most of his performances, there are comic and tragic elements at play, and the requirement for a great degree of physical exertion. In *I had to stop because I was scared*. 2014, black sandpaper is torn and assembled into a night time seascape.

Recent shows and performances include *NOT KNOWING BUT LOOKING*, Petra Rinck Galerie, Dusseldorf; *BRAVO, OH BRA – VO!*, Rotwand, Zurich; *I don't believe you, you're a liar*, Camden Arts Centre, London; *Paranalia*, GIBCA - Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, Gothenburg and travelling to Siobhan Davies Dance Studio, London; *Cassini Cruise III*, The Ridder, Maastricht, and *Spieltrieb*, Ibid, London. His upcoming shows include the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Marres, Maastricht and *en-core, en-core*, Rotwand, Zurich.

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