

# ALBION BARN

Douglas Gordon

## ... and his friends

18 October 2021 - 28 February 2022

Albion Barn is delighted to present '*...and his friends*', a solo exhibition of new paintings by Douglas Gordon.

Gordon utilises a multimedia approach to mark-making; employing printing, painting, burning and transfer; occasionally the kitchen sink. His ability to pull from all materials goes beyond the physical properties or reference of his research, as no iconography, cultural moment, or historical artefact is left unexploited. Gordon makes things by destroying things; he is just as unafraid to break down his idols as he is to worship them. Often pulling from existing cultural artefacts - from cinema or advertisements, science, religion, sport or the stars themselves - Gordon leans into the degradation suffered at the hands of time. His work is populated by 'unforgettable images of the past' - the barely remembered taste of... something undefined.

Gordon's paintings are process rigorous, using a 'primary school technique' which also illustrates the explosively intimate relationships between Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, and the progeny who are in the 'dark room' as it were - with all the connotations that come to mind. The canvases are burned, stained, and set upon with knives, needles, love and the necessity of keeping everything together - giving the fabric a metaphorical surface. Insisting on using the solvent transfer process, Gordon is appropriating the great appropriator, teasing Rauschenberg's *Inferno* series out of the 20th century and into the 'ancient present'. The dates may have changed but 'the song remains the same'... the question is - what can modern-day allegory possibly mean? Despite entering an age dominated by visual culture, imagery has become increasingly fleeting and variably observed. There is no rigidity in the icons of the 21st Century as there were within the paintings of the old masters, rather, they float, ill-defined and porous. The ethereal shades of the collage allow for a transient relation between the viewer and the paintings. The audience must sketch in the ties that spin like an amphetamine web - across the canvas, across the room, and beyond.

The zealous way in which Gordon besets his canvases is more alchemist than artist. Taking his knife to the body items he has collected and endlessly duplicated with a scanner, there is something of a mad scientist about him in his Gothic leather apron. His work as divider, reconstituter, makes him both Frankenstein and monster, in a *Jeckyl vs Hyde* amnesty, as the duality of his mournful and hedonistic practice is realised. Fire returns throughout this body of work: Gordon burns through his studio like a fever.

Robert Burns, a key figure of Gordon's youth growing up in Glasgow, is recurrent in '*...and his friends*'. As if to hold Burns up as an example of his unabashed re-appropriation of cultural iconography, Gordon has broken him in a work titled *Black Burns* - his notoriously punk attitude is not left outside of the studio. Gordon is keen to clarify, however, that it is not a sign of disrespect. He describes breaking the duplicate of the white marble statue by John Flaxman (an exact copy but for the fact it is in black) as an opening up. It is innately Scottish to have this familiarity with icons - often calling the poet 'Robbie Burns' - as a way of humanising what has been set in stone and raised above one's head.

Douglas Gordon was born in 1966, Glasgow, Scotland. He now works between Berlin, Glasgow and Paris. Gordon was the 1996 recipient of the Turner Prize and the Kunstpreis Niedersachsen, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover. In 1997 he was awarded the Premio 2000 at the 47th Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice and received the DAAD Stipend in Berlin. In 1998 he was presented with the Hugo Boss Prize at the Guggenheim Museum in SoHo, New York as well as with the Central Kunstpreis, Kölnischer Kunstverein Cologne and the Lord Provost's Award, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow. In May 2008 he won the Roswitha Haftmann Prize awarded by the Kunsthaus Zürich and he was the recipient of the Käthe-Kollwitz Prize 2012 awarded by the Akademie der Künste, Berlin. In 2012, Gordon became a Commandeur dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres, awarded the title by the French Cultural Minister in Berlin in 2017 on behalf of the French Republic. In 2016 the Research Centre for Film and Narrative Palermo awarded Gordon with the Efebo d'Oro Prize. In 2018 he became a Corresponding Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Edinburgh and a Member of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Gordon's work has been presented in solo exhibitions at major global institutions including Tate Britain, London; MoMA, New York; The National Gallery of Scotland; Hayward Gallery, London; Tate Liverpool, UK; ARoS Museum, Aarhus, Denmark; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin.

For Documenta14 in 2017, he presented a major work *I Had Nowhere to Go*, a ninety-seven-minute projected image installation tracing one minute in every year of filmmaker Jonas Mekas' life. His film works have been presented at Festival de Cannes, Toronto International Film Festival, Venice Film Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival, Festival del Film Locarno and New York Film Festival. In 2008 Gordon was Juror at the 65th International Venice Film Festival, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice and in 2012 he was the Jury president of CinemaXXI at the 07th Rome Film Festival, Festival Internazionale del Film di Roma, Rome.

