

ROBILANT+VOENA

JAMES BALMFORTH

Waypoints

26 October to 18 November 2016

Via Fontana 16, 20122 Milan

Robilant+Voena, in collaboration with Hannah Barry Gallery, are pleased to present *Waypoints*, a solo exhibition by James Balmforth, contemporary British sculptor raised in Italy. The exhibition is on view at their Milan gallery from 26 October to 18 November 2016.

James Balmforth's practice is remarkable in its celebration of process and implementation of a diverse range of materials, which he manipulates using highly sophisticated and innovative (sometimes verging on alchemical) techniques. The result is a body of work that questions our understandings of material reality and tests the physical limitations and chemical components of his chosen medium. His process could be considered constructive, but often his resulting sculpture serves to dismantle meaning, by placing technique and medium at the service of phenomenological – rather than purely formal – application. As Balmforth explains, "*Materials are information bearing: they have inner constitutions with inbuilt tendencies; concealed aspects of their structure that dictate how they behave and interact. Tools and processes are information disclosing: their influence and application can reveal the structural properties, hidden qualities and embedded characteristics ... offering a glimpse into the inner life of materials.*"

Keys to approaching the sculptures include an awareness of their confrontation of the organic and technological worlds, the interplay of biological and mechanical systems and a consideration of thresholds, margins of tolerance, moments of transformation and their resultant forms or outcomes. The blade of *Gallium Dagger* (2012), for example, is made of the metal gallium, which melts at body temperature, whereas the handle is made of brass and steel. As such, the materials challenge the dagger's perceived purpose.

Several of Balmforth's most recent sculptures are made using an instrument that has never been explored in sculptural production: a thermal lance. The tool was developed in post-industrial society as a heavy-duty demolition device to destroy large-scale industrial equipment such as cranes, ships and bridges. The lance uses pure oxygen to burn steel tubes at extraordinarily high temperatures. By varying the heat and velocity of the reaction and adjusting the material composition of the fuel rods it is possible to achieve a broad range of effects on the material. Through his use of the lance, Balmforth can thereby challenge the limitations and potential of both the process and material.

In many ways, James Balmforth's sculptural oeuvre could, to an extent, be seen to operate on the foundations set by art historical movements spanning from Mannerism, to the Baroque, process art and extending to Post-Minimalism. His practice celebrates process and a wide range of materials such as animal fat, steel, aluminium and cast iron.

LONDON

38 DOVER STREET, W1S 4NL
TEL+442074091540

MILAN

VIA FONTANA 16, 20122
TEL+39028056179

ST.MORITZ

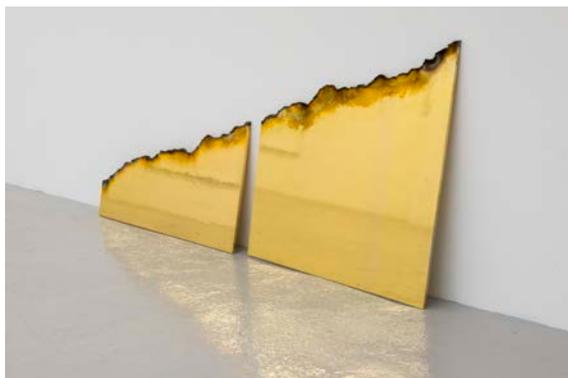
VIA SERLAS 35, CH-7500
TEL +41 81 833 34 36



ROBILANT+VOENA

This exhibition comprises a group of the artist's new sculpture with two of his memorable early video works, *Systems of Remembering and Forgetting* (2007) and *The Consumptive Sublime* (2009). The installation seeks to highlight the associative potential of the artist's work and the play of language across the medium and messages of his oeuvre.

The exhibition is curated by Carolyn Miner.



James Balmforth
Imperfect Detachment, 2014
Oxy-fuel severed 24k gold electroplated steel
2 parts: 60 x 92 x 1.5 cm & 100 x 92 x 1.5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Hannah Barry Gallery
Photo credit Damian Griffiths



James Balmforth
WE DON'T HAVE DRAWINGS WE THINK AND WE BUILD, 2009
Welded steel I-beams with hand-painted lettering
98 x 195 x 10 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Hannah Barry Gallery



James Balmforth
Gallium Dagger, 2012
Gallium, steel, brass
35 x 5 x 2 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Hannah Barry Gallery



James Balmforth
Accumulation Point (I), 2016
Thermic lance steel, slag, stainless steel
80 x 41.5 x 41.5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Hannah Barry Gallery
Photo credit Damian Griffiths

LONDON
38 DOVER STREET, W1S 4NL
TEL+442074091540

MILAN
VIA FONTANA 16, 20122
TEL+39028056179

ST.MORITZ
VIA SERLAS 35, CH-7500
TEL +41 81 833 34 36

art@robilantvoena.com / www.robilantvoena.com

R+V
PRESS RELEASE