the annual Tate Britain Commission which offers an artist the opportunity to create a new artwork in response to the Duveen Galleries.

Mike Nelson has transformed the heart of Tate Britain into somewhere between a sculpture court and an asset stripper's warehouse. After scouring online auctions of company liquidators, he has carefully selected objects from post-war Britain.

Nelson has been inspired by the Duveen Galleries' origins in 1937 as the first purpose-built sculpture galleries in England, turning them into a warehouse of monuments to a lost era

EVENTS

Artist's Talk Friday 21 June 2019 18.30-20.00 £10/£7. Clore Auditorium

Audio Description Tour Mon 15 April 11.00-12.30

BSL Tour Sat 20 April 11.00-12.00



The Asset Strippers has been created for | Curated by Clarrie Wallis, Senior Curator of Contemporary British Art and Flsa Coustou Curator of Contemporary British Art

> Tate Britain Commission 2019: Mike Nelson is supported by

Sotheby's

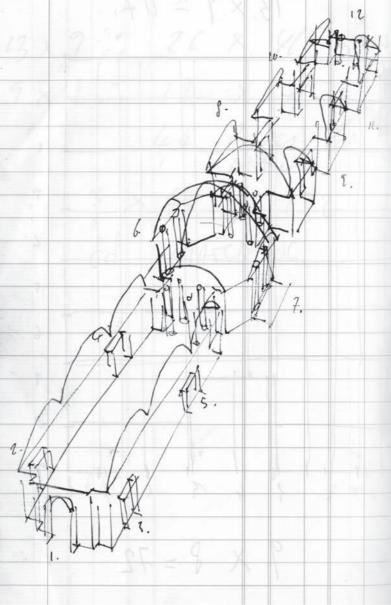
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With thanks to Ben Burgis Silvia Calvia Paul Carter Michael Falzor Charlie Falzon Juleigh Gordon-Orr Mikei Hall David Jones Emma Leach Rachel Lowe Stuart Middleton Kate Parsons Ksenia Pedan Isabel Pina Ferreira Rosie Rynn O'Shea Andy Shiel Bernard Smyth James Stewart Liam Tebbs Nick Tudor Oran Wishart Tate Art Installation team and Tate Stores

Design by Tate Design Studio

To the memory of Eric Nelson

Cover image: Photo: Mike Nelson and Matt Greenwood Poster image: Work in progress, February 2019. Photo: Matt Greenwood



Preparatory sketch of the Duveen Galleries, Mike Nelson, 2018

28 February 2019

ain is meant to be leaving Europe. the show is opening ten days before Britficularly strange time because obviously but reflect it to some degree. It's a parrent political situation, but you can't help make a work that's purely about the curat a certain point in time. I don't want to Asset Strippers is very much about Britain er-expanding Europe. Like Lionheart, The tween the empire of the past and an evtories. This was a crossroads of sorts bethrough the remnants of their own hisimmigrants from a colonial past, picking gent underclass mixing with the recent izh markets were populated by an emerthe cusp of change. At the time the Britheading towards Britain, a country on tall of Communism, some of which were dormant were being reopened affer the and their markets which had been

It felt like the old Eastern trade routes from the backs of over-filled vans. ogy proliterated in the cultural defritus strange animal skins and archaic technolern Bloc. Old medals and Soviet militaria, clusively by those from the former Eastsaw that the markets were run almost exate a fictional drifter's camp. In Bremen I from markets and car boot sales to creal painstakingly collected and assembled scriptive of the people with whom they | many and was constructed from materi-Künstlerhaus, Bremen, in northern Germi eiseled et the Galerie im objects as most bear the traces of those | glecting his subjects at home. The work truly focus on foreign exploits whilst nerialist king of England - the first ruler to Lionheart was named after the first imperope after the fall of the Soviet Union. -u3 gnibneqxer-expanding Euthe death of Diana and a crisis of monarthe birth of new Labour, coinciding with shift back into just being the very matter | history – the end of Conservative rule and

303 Gallery, New York; Galleria Franco Noero, Turin; Matt's Gallery, London; and neugerriemschneider, Berlin. Mike Nelson, Lionheart, 1997. Installation view, The New Art Gallery Walsall, 2018. Photo: Jonathan Shaw. Courtesy the artist and



ship to this work in that it was made at Yes, Lionheart has quite a strong relation-

you made in 1997 titled 'Lionheart'. This exhibition has similar qualities to a work

are both anthropomorphic but also dewho used them, and in that way they this is what has drawn me to these always focused on humanity and I think However, ultimately my work has

things outside of themselves. two states they can also start to resemble made from. Somewhere in between these from where they came, or what they are can be what they purport to be but also | a particularly pivotal moment in British dustry. I'm interested in the way objects way, industry feeding art, art feeding inmachinery and whose influence was twocentury that was both made possible by lineage of sculpture through the twentieth er or in close proximity. If brings to mind a ασυι κυσυ λοη λισκι ιυσες ορίστιε ιοβσιυsculpture and back again seems very evithe symbiotic relationship of machine to with material very much as sculpture – in many ways quite traditional as it deals phasis. What I've made for the Duveens is are in invisible, to a more sculptural em- $\ensuremath{\gamma}$ that all but renders the buildings they merse the viewer in an alternate realilarge architectural constructions that im-Of late my work has shifted its focus from

Does this represent a change in your

fare state that has been in decline since al way, conjuring the memory of the welof Defence are also present in a materi-

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Service, public housing and the Ministry Street, London... so the National Health rne doors are from a nospital in bolsover housing estate in South London, some of er up the windows of a re-developed' graffitied steel sheeting was used to covarmy barracks in Shrewsbury, while the work, has been stripped out of a former ample. Uther material, such as the woodhaulage or the telephone system for exagriculture and infrastructure as well -To some degree, but I've also focused on

anis sinti trom manuacturing to a service ful selection of objects is reflective of Brit-

50, are we right in thinking that this care-

© Robert Thomas Copthorne Barracks, Shrewsbury, 2019



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mike Nelson (born Loughborough, 1967) lives and works in London. He constructs large-scale, site-specific sculptural environments that often arise from a period of living and working in a particular location. His works fuse literary, filmic, sociopolitical and cultural references to create carefully orchestrated tableaux. Nelson represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 2011 and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2001 and 2007.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Solo exhibitions and projects include: L'Atteso, Officine Grandi Riparazioni, Turin 2018; Lionheart, New Art Gallery Walsall. Walsall 2018: Re-bar, wire-mesh cross-hatch (Romanian heroes), Sandwich, Bucharest 2017; A52, CAPRI, Düsseldorf 2017; Cloak of rags (Tale of a dismembered bank, rendered in blue), Galleria Franco Noero, Turin 2017; tools that see (possessions of a thief) 1985–2005, neugerriemschneider, Berlin 2016; Cloak, Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco 2016; Imperfect geometry for a concrete quarry, Kalkbrottet, Limhamn, Malmö 2016; Amnesiac Shrine or The Misplacement... Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam 2016; Gang of Seven, 303 Gallery, New York 2015; Studio apparatus for Kunsthalle Münster, Kunsthalle Münster 2014; Eighty Circles through Canada Tramway, Glasgow 2014; Amnesiac Hide, The Powerplant, Toronto 2014; Mike Nelson, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver 2013; More things (To the memory of Honoré de Balzac), Matt's Gallery, London 2013; M6, Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK 2013; space that saw (platform for a performance in two parts) neugerriemschneider, Berlin 2012; 408 tons of imperfect

geometry, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö 2012; I. IMPOSTOR, British Pavilion, 54th Biennale di Venezia 2011; Quiver of Arrows, 303 Gallery, New York 2010: A Psychic Vacuum, Creative Time, New York 2007; AMNESIAC SHRINE or Double coop displacement, Matt's Gallery, London 2006; Triple Bluff Canyon, Modern Art Oxford 2004; Nothing is True. Everything is Permitted, ICA, London 2001; The Deliverance and The Patience, a PEER Commission for the Venice Biennale 2001 and The Coral Reef. Matt's Gallery, London 2000.

Group shows include: 12th Gwangiu Biennale 2018; 250th Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London 2018; Wanderlust, The High Line, New York 2016; La Vie Moderne, 13th Biennale de Lyon 2015; INSIDE, Palais de Tokyo, Paris 2014: September 11, MoMA PS1, New York 2011; Singapore Biennale 2011; Altermodern: Tate Triennial. Tate Britain 2009: Psvcho Buildings, Hayward Gallery, London 2008; Eclipse: Art in a Dark Age, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2008; Reality Check, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 2008; Turner Prize, Tate Liverpool 2007; Frieze Projects, Frieze Art Fair, London 2006; and Turner Prize, Tate Britain, London 2001



with the absurd.

drama or piece of social realism finged Birthday Party, for example, a kitchen sink Harold Pinter play – The Caretaker or The also suggests a narrative potential like a tions like beach debris. However, the title have acted like an ocean laying out opin the months preceding the opening Which to select the works - the auctions provided a fatalistic structure through liquidators to amass the objects. It also tions of asset strippers and company nology. That is why I used the online auchas superseded it - that of digital techindustrial material through the era that ticularly pointed that I should access the manufacturing industry, if seemed parsuggested somehow. In focusing on the could have gone unnoticed if it were not work, and I was worried that the process process I have gone through to make the

fell us about the title, 'The Asset Strippers'? warenouse of archifectural saivage, can you tween that of a sculpture court and a grand Your idea for this show is somewhere be-

pertinent.

This title has a direct relationship to the

trial era seems quite sad but also quite chinery from the latter part of our indusourselves. This idea of buying back of maof self-consumption, an eating away of cannibalising of all we have left – a sort mulated here are the ends of an era, the possible – industry. What I have accuof what made these grand museums but they are the last remaining vestiges foreign interests or colonial excursions, extensive British empire or from British displays. These artefacts are not from the the very materiality of the sculpture that it al and political status of Britain through

sculpture could be linked to the imperi-

exhibition space used for the display of

zuin century. I was interested in now an 19th century and the beginning of the ai prowess, particularly inrougnour me -intrubni diw qu bnuod sew noiteutis sti to be in such a position of power - Inat Britain and its empire historically came Underpinning inis i was interested in now

Were there other considerations?

to that of an archeological sife. full of artefacts – to create a scene similar scale that is found in such places - spaces decipher. I wanted to explore the shift of out allowing the visitor to navigate and eclectic, ethnographic collections are laid ies of the British Museum. Places where and Albert Museum or the lower galler-Sented in the cast room at the victoria much the same way as objects are prejects. In this sense I imagined the work in at the sheer physicality of sculptural obwyere people could come and wonder halls for monumental sculpture. Places

ρε returned to what they once had been, I felt that these galleries should somehow

selling works of art to industrialists. Lord Duveen who had made his fortune by Yes. The extension was funded in 1937 by

somehow seems strangely apt. ly brief and visionary moment in time idiosyncratic monuments to a historicalveens becoming a warehouse to house vanity and inequality. The idea of the Duin the wake of state decline, spawning new Victorian era of wealthy patronage I see ahead, particularly in the arts, is a at social equality seem long gone. What Britain, its welfare state and its attempts jectory. However, the vision of post- war that I expected to continue in a linear 1raa world into which I was born, and one core or my Itame or reletence as It was of its socially progressive vision form the this epoch's decline, along with aspects through the 1970s and 80s. Elements of

King George VI opening the Duveen Galleries, 29 June, 1937 © Morning Post, 30 June, 1937



the industry's sometimes brutal demise ractories in the East Midiands, Witnessing ly my mother, they worked in the textile Along with my grandfather, and initialting machines worked on by my father. itial thoughts focused on the huge knitthe latter half of the 20th century. My inparents and of my childhood, of Britain in concentrating on the post-war era of my a past world. I was drawn to the idea of play of sculpture. My vision was of the England designed specifically for the disveens were the first public galleries in I was interested in the fact that the Du-

Sejirəlled nəsvud ədt ot əsnoqesi leitini this in mind can you start by describing your made in response to specific locations. With You are acclaimed for your large-scale works

UOTZUOD AZJ3 WITH CLARRIE WALLIS AND MIKE NELSON IN CONVERSATION



Duveen Galleries, 1937

