

The Baldwin Gallery

The Sublunary World

April 4 – May 16, 2017

An exhibition at The Baldwin Gallery exploring the organic and psychic transference between selves and species, with sculpture by Royal Academician Tim Shaw, and the shape-changing photography of Canadian David Ellingsen and Cree Canadian Meryl McMaster.

The Sublunary World brings together the polymorphic figures of Royal Academician Tim Shaw's *Middle World* with the *Anthropocene* skulls and *Future Imperfect* body-landscapes of Canadian photographer David Ellingsen and the self-portraiture of photographer Meryl McMaster.

Tim Shaw RA, known for his immersive installations (from the vast oil and rebar *Casting a Dark Democracy* to the AI sculpture, *Breakdown Clown*) has been described by art critic Mark Hudson as 'one of the great storytellers of British art,' creating an extraordinary 'tension between tradition and nowness, between solidity and nightmarish breakdown'. In *The Sublunary World*, these tensions multiply when *Middle World* figures in bronze and resin – revealing a classical prowess reminiscent of Rodin and a contemporary scope that is primal, political and fundamentally 'other' – meet the surrealist-environmentalism of Ellingsen and the postcolonial self-creations of McMaster.

David Ellingsen is an environmentalist and archivist artist. His *Anthropocene* series is inspired by the proposed renaming of our current geological epoch, based on global evidence that Earth's natural systems have been irrevocably altered by human activity. The term 'anthropocene' redefines our geological time period as human-influenced. Ellingsen's transmuted skeletal remains, adrift on a black background, are both a warning and a rendering of hope. His *Future Imperfect* series realises the same ambiguity: the 'focus stacked' replication of the naked male body in landscape evokes both new-born and corpse, animal and mineral, flotsam and jetsam, and the intimate and expansive.

Meryl McMaster is a sculptural-photographer-cum-performance artist who pits hybrid inheritances and constructed identities – Native American, European, female – against the immediacy of the lived body in the natural world. Like Ellingsen, she inserts and distorts her own body inside a landscape at once familiar and ‘betwixt’. She expresses her heritage as a synergistic strength of unities – rather than a struggle between opposites. In *Avian Wanderer*, she rides a bicycle through the planes, while birds fly from her head. In *Aphoristic Currents*, her head is imprisoned in a massive Victorian ruff, constructed from newspapers which entirely fill the frame. In *Brumal Tattoo*, she is seen bloodied and exuberant and half-subsumed by a massive drum, referencing both the European use of ‘field music’ to control troops in battle, and the beating of the drum that, in her indigenous tradition, represents the beating of the heart.

Works by Shaw, Ellingsen and McMaster meet in the realm of the contemporary-primal and the organic imagination.

Cosmo Sheldrake will perform at the Baldwin’s music-dinner salon on April 25th. Sheldrake is a multi-instrumentalist musician and composer – playing everything from banjo to loop station, keyboards, double bass, drums, penny whistle, sousaphone and accordion, and composing with ‘recordings of the Sun, taped using a technique called Stellar Seismology’ and featuring ‘field recordings of Ecuadorian flutes and singing from the Central African Aka Pigmies’. Performed in The Baldwin’s intimate home environment, Sheldrake’s music will be accompanied by a menu ‘of the earth’, created by Daniela Paiva, founder of Cooknst.

The Baldwin Gallery is open by appointment and for lunches and salons. After an initial run in Blackheath, a selection of McMaster’s and Ellingsen’s work will move to Blacks Club in Soho during Photo London (May 2017).

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Notes to editors:

The Baldwin Gallery: founder and creative director **Dennison Smith** established The Baldwin Gallery as a space for bringing contemporary art into European home life, with special attention to indigenous North American artists. Smith, an internationally acclaimed novelist whose writing draws upon her experiences on the Navajo reservation, was inspired by the Native American

understanding of art as who you are and where you live, thus prompting her to create an elegant home-based gallery, where art is a fully integrated experience.

Tim Shaw RA was born in Belfast in 1964 and lives in Cornwall. He was elected to The Royal Academy in 2013 and made a Fellow of The Royal British Society of Sculptors and a Fellow of Falmouth University the same year. Shaw has had a number of significant solo shows throughout the UK, Ireland and internationally. Most recently the major public solo exhibition *Black Smoke Rising*, which toured from Mac Birmingham to Aberystwyth Arts Centre. During 2014, Shaw's work featured in *Reflections of War* at Flowers Gallery, London, and *Back Front the Front presents: Shock and Awe – Contemporary Artists at War and Peace* at the Royal West of England Academy.

Meryl McMaster was born in 1988. She is a Canadian-based artist and a BFA graduate in photography from the Ontario College of Art and Design. She is the recipient of numerous awards and distinctions, including the Canon Canada Prize, the Nora E. Vaughan Award, and the Ontario College of Art and Design Medal, Photography. Her work explores questions of identity, representation, perception, myth, memory and the environment.

David Ellingsen is originally from Cortes Island, a remote community of 1000 residents in Canada's Pacific Northwest. Born in 1969, he began his photographic career at the age of 30 in the advertising and editorial fields, attracting client assignments that include the New York Times Magazine, Men's Health, People, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and agencies DDB and Grey Worldwide. Since 2001, he has shown in multiple solo and group exhibitions in Canada, the USA, Asia, and Europe and has work in the permanent collections of the Beaty Biodiversity Museum, the Dana Farber Cancer Centre at Harvard University and the Chinese Museum of Photography. Recent work was shortlisted for Photolucida's Critical Mass Book Award, awarded First Place at the Prix de la Photographie Paris (PX3) in Paris, France and also First Place at the International Photography Awards in Los Angeles. Ellingsen now divides his time between Vancouver, Victoria and Cortes Island in British Columbia, Canada.

Cosmo Sheldrake is a 27 year old multi-instrumentalist musician, composer and producer. Much of his work is concerned with improvisation, nonsense and the sonorous environment, often incorporating recordings of the natural world. He is signed to Transgressive Records, with whom he released his debut E.P. 'Pelicans We'. Cosmo has toured internationally, written music for theatre and film and in 2013 ran a community choir in Brighton. He is currently working on his debut album.

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