

## Stephen Friedman Gallery

### Jonathan Baldock Facecrime (suspect)

1-31 July 2020



Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present a new installation 'Facecrime (suspect)' by British artist **Jonathan Baldock** in Gallery Two. Accompanying the installation is a solo exhibition of Andreas Eriksson's tapestries in Gallery One and Yinka Shonibare CBE's profound new sculpture 'Justice For All' in the Viewing Room.

Originally commissioned for Art Basel Hong Kong 2020 before the fair's cancellation, 'Facecrime (suspect)' is a monumental installation comprising precariously stacked ceramic columns. Evoking both ancient ruins and a surreal vision of the future, these hand-crafted forms reflect the artist's interest in myth, folklore and narratives associated with 'outsider' practices. Baldock's use of cobalt blue makes the work shimmer and glow with a spiritual, alchemical quality.

Protruding from the columns' vibrantly glazed surfaces are casts from Baldock's body: disembodied ears, beckoning fingers, and hands pushing and punching in mid-air. Shaped as if in the process of coming to life, the installation echoes the artist's ongoing interest in making objects that are frequently activated by performances. Audible groans, whistles and chuckles stream through concealed speakers and accentuate the work's exploration of types of communication that evade verbal articulation. The overall sense of physicality finds humorous counterweight in the application of clay tokens engraved with emoticons and pictorial representations of facial expressions.

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## Gallery Hours

Tuesday–Friday, 11am–5pm

## Social Media

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This installation is the second major work born out of Baldock's residency at Camden Arts Centre, London as part of the Freelands Lomax Ceramics Fellowship. The residency resulted in a solo exhibition that opened there in April 2019 before touring to Tramway Glasgow and Bluecoat, Liverpool in 2020. For this work Baldock studied the British Museum's collection of Mesopotamian clay tablets, which trace the linguistic evolution of pictograms into cuneiform script, the world's oldest writing system. Inspired by these ancient modes of communication, the artist explored the potential of clay as a tool of expression.

'Facecrime' takes its title from protagonist Winston Smith in George Orwell's dystopian novel '1984' who proclaimed: "To wear an improper expression on your face is a punishable offence." Baldock explains, "I thought the idea of policing expressions was interesting because so much of [my] work is about facial expressions or how we communicate non-verbally."

Baldock was born in 1980 in Kent, UK and lives and works in London. He works across multiple platforms including sculpture, installation and performance. Baldock's first solo exhibition with Stephen Friedman Gallery opened in September 2019. A large-scale, interactive sculpture by the artist was also on view at Fitzrovia Chapel, London during Frieze week in 2019. Other notable solo and two-person exhibitions include those at De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill (2017); Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool (2017); Southwark Park Galleries, London (2017); PEER, London (2016); Chapter Gallery, Cardiff (2016); Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2013).

Forthcoming solo exhibitions include Kunsthall Stavanger in September 2020; Accelerator, Stockholm in April 2021; and La Casa Encendida, Madrid in September 2021.

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