

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Gavin Turk, *Rotrophydhian*, 2017, paper boxes in cabinet, 200 x 403 x 31.5 cm. (78 3/4 x 158 5/8 x 12 3/8 in.)

## GAVIN TURK

### GIVE IN

9 FEBRUARY – 12 APRIL 2017

PRIVATE VIEW WEDNESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY, 6-8PM

Ben Brown Fine Arts is delighted to present *Give In*, an exhibition of Gavin Turk's highly influential works to coincide with the artist's major survey show, *Who What When Where How & Why*, at Damien Hirst's award-winning Newport Street Gallery. *Give In* transforms the gallery into a Museum of Curiosities, with pseudo-archaeological objects in cabinets punctuating the space, an installation cum magician's trick, and brand new *tromp l'oeil* sculptures.

Over the last three decades, Turk has relentlessly challenged the notions of value, authorship and identity in his work, audaciously intermingling references both to modern masters, and to himself, in the pieces he creates. *Give In* plays with the modernist framework; the works presented allude to the nuances of language, philosophy and to the Age of Reason and beyond. Paternal art historical references are layered like geological strata: Josef Albers, Joseph Beuys, Christo, Marcel Duchamp, Damien Hirst, Donald Judd and Joseph Kosuth, are familiar forbearers who resonate in his work.

Turk will premiere new works inspired by the defining 'boxes' Judd began in the Sixties. *Balloons*, *Nature Nurture*, *Purgatory* and *Ship in a Bottle* (all 2017) cleverly fuse the careful minimalist structures of the Juddish boxes with the worn and discarded found objects within. Viewers are forced to look, and then look again. By juxtaposing these materials, Turk elevates familiarly banal objects to undeniably significant pieces of art, pushing the viewer to take notice of the form and function of the object. This idea is echoed

in *Rotrophydian* (2017), the museum's high altar, in which the sleek, clinical Pop Art aesthetic of Hirst's iconic 'medicine cabinets' are challenged by the very detritus that fills it – making provocative references to utopian images of an ideal society and addressing age-old philosophical preoccupations with birth, death and decay. These latest works add another layer of illusion to the artist's subversion of the rules of commercial art.

In our post-factual reality, the transition between throwaway rubbish and that which is elevated to the bastions of high art – through casting in bronze with Turk's pioneering *trompe l'oeil* surface – is not so instantly perceptible and requires our close observation. *Injuries also Occur in the Language* (2015), *Triple QX*, *ATF Plus* (2015) and *Killer Filler* (2017) are exquisitely detailed sculptures that resemble punctured and depleted footballs, petrol cans, car filler and paint tubes respectively.

As visitors walk through the gallery they will eventually come to enter *Give In* (2017), an installation that welcomes, puzzles and intrigues. An impish reference to Duchamp's infamous last major artwork *Étant donnés (Given)* (1946-66), *Give In* is an optical illusion, visible only through a key hole in an old wooden door; instead of Duchamp's tableau of a nude woman lying on her back, Turk presents his audience with a distorted examination of self, through the lens of the artist.

### **About the artist**

Gavin Turk was born 1967 in Guildford and went to the Royal College of Art in London. In his MA exhibition show, *Cave* (1991), he presented a whitewashed studio space containing only a blue heritage plaque commemorating his presence. Though refused a degree, his subsequent notoriety attracted the attention of Charles Saatchi and he became part of a loosely associated group known as the 'Young British Artists' (YBAs). He has since been represented by many major galleries throughout the world and is known for pioneering many forms of contemporary British sculpture now taken for granted, including the painted bronze, the waxwork, the recycled art-historical icon and the use of rubbish in art. He has recently been commissioned to make several public sculptures including *L'Âge d'Or* (2016), sited on the south corner of the Press Centre building in the Olympic Park and *Nail*, a 12-meter sculpture at One New Change, next to St Paul's Cathedral, London, England.

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