

GOWEN CONTEMPORARY

GENEVA, Switzerland

NICK LAESSING

Solo Project

Roma Contemporary Art Fair

Rome, 25-27 May, 2012

In his work, composed of sculptures, installations, films and drawings, Nick Laessing explores the border areas of science, probing its relationship to the inconceivable.

Reflecting the utopian and romantic aspirations of many amateur scientists and mathematicians of the past centuries he designs and builds his own devices.

Often departing from historical research of inventions that never became mainstream or were short-lived, Laessing's sculptures and installations attempt to find the unexploited potentials in the obsolete or overlooked. Examples of this include: the *Eidophone*, an instrument through which the vibrations and resonance of the voice can create images on a surface and *Spatial Harmonics*, a mechanical installation that employs pendulums to create geometric drawings corresponding to the theory of harmonics. He has also worked with electrical machines alleged to harness energy from the atmosphere, as well as a radio first made by Friedrich Jürgenson to capture the frequency of the voices of the dead.

Gowen Contemporary is pleased to present a series of works that Nick Laessing has specifically conceived for Roma Contemporary. These works are the result of the artist's experiments with his most recent construction, a machine that transforms water into hydrogen-oxygen gas. This little known technology was in use in the first decades of the 20th century and during the second world war during shortages of conventional fuels. Many amateur inventors and experimenters now believe that this technology can offer a pollution-free alternative to fossil fuel. The inventor Stanley Meyer (USA) claimed to have run a car in the 1980s using only water as a fuel to produce hydroxy. There are also many apocryphal stories surrounding this gas (often called hydroxy or Brown's gas), that include the idea that it can melt any material its flame is in contact with.

The series of works presented at Roma Contemporary includes Nick Laessing's device *Electrolyser* in a 1:1 scale photographic print; steel plates that have been destroyed by the flame of the gas produced by the machine as well as a series of photographic prints depicting experiments made using the same process to melt found glass objects. The production of the 'destroyed' works counterpoints the intensive and fastidious effort and research involved in building the *Electrolyser*. The exhibition also presents the sculpture *After Alessandro Volta*, 2012, a replication of Alessandro Volta's 1800 invention of the first primitive battery. Six weeks after its initial public demonstration at the Royal Institution in London it was used to discover the electrolysis of water.

Nick Laessing (b. 1973, UK, lives in Berlin). Recent exhibitions include: CEAAC, Strasbourg (solo, 2011); Centre Pompidou, Paris (group show, 2011); *Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione: or, The Drawing Machines*, Gregor Podnar, Berlin (group show, 2010); *Heaven*, 2nd Athens Biennial, Athens (2009); *The Show Will Be Titled After Its End*, FormContent, London (2008); *Manifesto Marathon*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2008 / performance); *Tales Of Disbelief*, cur. Simone Menegoi, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec, Paris (2008); *We All Turn This Way*, Frank Gehry Pavilion, Serpentine Gallery, London (2008 / performance); *On Aether: Athanasios Argianas and Nick Laessing*, Cell Project Space, London (2007). Solo exhibitions include: Arcade Fine Arts, London (2009); *Energizer*, cur. Florence Ostende, Galerie Paul Freches, Paris (2009); Faye Fleming & Partner (now called Gowen Contemporary), Geneva (2007); Mary Mary, Glasgow (2005).

GOWEN CONTEMPORARY Sàrl

Registered office: place du Grand-Mézel 2-4, 1204 Genève

Tel: +41 (0) 22 700 30 68 / Mob: +41 (0) 79 330 17 54 / E-mail: info@gowencontemporary.com

www.gowencontemporary.com