

V1 Gallery presents



Going to Market, Returning Home

- A solo exhibition by Jon Pilkington

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY MAY 3. 2019. TIME: 17.00 - 21.00

EXHIBITION PERIOD: MAY 4 – JUNE 1. 2019

Jon Pilkington's solo exhibition *Going to Market, Returning Home* takes its departure in the British tradition of Staffordshire pottery (1780 – 1875). The folk-art pottery tradition of creating earthenware figurines or small tableaux originated in mid England around 1780, in a time where illustrations and printed images were very rare for common people. In the beginning the figurines mainly depicted classical motifs such as characters from Greek myths, Shakespeare plays, or the British poet John Milton's writings. The figurines were made from clay, cheaper than the expensive and temperamental porcelain, and constructed in molds that allowed for a faster and more reliable production. The relatively cheap production combined with the growing consumption by the new middle class, fueled by the industrial revolution, made for a democratization of the sculptures.

The increasing popularity, after 1810, led to a change in subject matter, the sculptures no longer only mimicked the porcelain figurines of the upper class, typically dogs and lions, but started relating everyday life, news and current events: Shepherds and shepherdesses, farming, political intrigues, new marriage laws, famous boxing matches, the abolition of British slavery, celebrity murders, and other news of the world. In a sense, Staffordshire pottery became the first Pop art - engaging contemporary life in a current form, readily available to the public. The Staffordshire figurines were created to share visual stories at a time when most of the British population was illiterate, and the proliferation of mass-produced images was still in its nascency.

In Pilkington's new body of work, the Staffordshire figurines appear in oil paintings and concrete sculptures. In the paintings, the figures are given new life, they appear current, rendered with urgency, and historical, with an air of melancholy or longing, caught in the eternal pose. The paintings are layered and the compositions weave fragments of abstraction and figuration together. Letting objects dissolve into textures and hues while building shapes and structures from layers of swift brushstrokes. The works are precise and specific while maintaining a mystery allure. On repeated viewings, the compositions shift and the focal point changes. The works collapse and rebuild themselves. Fragmented poems with multiple possible readings. With this group of paintings Pilkington continues his painterly agenda of exploring the potential of the medium through figuration and abstraction and investigating the role of the motif in contemporary painting.

The concrete sculptures in *Going to Market, Returning Home* mimic the shapes of the traditional Staffordshire figurines, Pilkington has sculpted them with inspiration from his own growing collection of figurines that has long been considered poor taste - partly due to the many mass-produced copies and imitations of the traditional sculptures. In Pilkington's versions, the structure of the concrete surface lends itself perfectly to his painterly approach. The figures appear fragmented and challenged in composure by abstraction. Caught in a limbo between two states of existence. In flux. The perfect partners, or vice versa, of the paintings.

Going to Market, Returning Home is an exploration of form, language and feeling. The narratives of the old figurines are rewritten, revived and re-contextualized in the new paintings and sculptures. The Staffordshire figurines are the propellant for Pilkington's curious journey into the abyss, and the exhibition, a remarkable travel log of transfiguration.

Jon Pilkington (b. 1990, St. Helens, England) currently lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark. Pilkington holds a MFA degree in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art and Design (2013). Recent solo exhibitions include *Strangers to Ourselves* at Achenbach & Hagemeyer, Dusseldorf (2017), *Weather for Leather* at COMA, Sydney (2017), and *House Pictures* at Cinnamon, Rotterdam (2017). *Going To Market, Returning Home* is Jon Pilkington's second solo exhibition with V1 Gallery.

Please do not hesitate to contact the gallery for further information, press photos or artists interviews:
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Opening hours: Wednesday-Friday: 12-18. Saturday: 12-16. Or by appointment.
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