



PRESS RELEASE
18 March 2019

MIKE NELSON: THE ASSET STRIPPERS

18 March – 6 October 2019

Tate Britain, Duveen Galleries

Supported by Sotheby's with additional support from AGC Equity Partners and logistics support from Tuplin Fine Art

Open daily 10.00 – 18.00

Tate Britain today unveils *The Asset Strippers*, a major new work by Mike Nelson. *The Asset Strippers* has been created for the annual Tate Britain Commission, supported by Sotheby's, which invites artists to create a new artwork in response to the grand space of the Duveen Galleries.

Mike Nelson has transformed the heart of Tate Britain into somewhere between a sculpture court and an asset strippers' warehouse, carefully selecting objects from a past world, the post-war Britain that framed his childhood. Nelson's project has been informed by the Duveen Galleries' origins as the first purpose-built sculpture galleries in England, intended to rival the sculpture court at the British Museum and the V&A's cast room, turning the neo-classical galleries into a warehouse of monuments to a lost era and the vision of society it represented.

The artist has scoured online auctions of company liquidators and salvage yards to amass a collection of objects which point to the decline of British industry, infrastructure and the welfare state. Similar to the ancient artefacts displayed in museums, *The Asset Strippers* presents remnants from a bygone era: knitting machines from textile factories reminiscent of the ones he grew up around in the East Midlands, woodwork stripped from a former army barracks, graffitied steel awnings used to secure a condemned housing estate in South London and doors from an NHS hospital. Presented together in an installation which fills the Duveen Galleries, Nelson creates a melancholic journey through Britain's recent social and political history.

Nelson is interested in the cultural and social contexts behind the objects he has carefully selected, as well as their material qualities. As the artist explains: "Their manipulation and arrangement subtly shifts them from what they once were into sculpture, and then back again to what they are – examples of the machines and equipment left over from industry and infrastructure. The exhibition weaves this allusion with that of British history. It presents us with a vision of artefacts cannibalised from the last days of the industrial era in place of the treasures of empire that would normally adorn such halls."

Alex Farquharson, Director, Tate Britain, said: "We are delighted to present Mike Nelson's profound new commission *The Asset Strippers* here at Tate Britain. Drawing on a unique period in British history, Nelson demonstrates his remarkable ability to create extraordinary and unforgettable experiences within the gallery. We look forward to welcoming visitors to engage with this truly unique commission."

Alex Branczik, Sotheby's European Head of Contemporary Art said: "Each year, the Duveens Commission brings a spectacular installation to the heart of Tate Britain. It is with great pleasure that we support the commission in its twelfth iteration, which will see Mike Nelson take on the historic architecture of the Duveen galleries with a labyrinthine sculptural work, attesting to the artist's unique contribution to the British artistic landscape."

Mike Nelson: The Asset Strippers is curated by Clarrie Wallis, Senior Curator of Contemporary British Art, Tate, and Elsa Coustou, Curator of Contemporary British Art, Tate.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THE TATE BRITAIN COMMISSION

Mike Nelson: The Asset Strippers is the latest in a series of contemporary commissions for artists to develop a new work in the Tate Britain's Duveen Galleries. Artists who have previously undertaken commissions in the Duveens at Tate Britain include Anthea Hamilton (2018), Cerith Wyn Evans (2017), Pablo Bronstein (2016), Christina Mackie (2015), Phyllida Barlow (2014), Simon Starling (2013), Patrick Keiller (2012), Fiona Banner (2010), Eva Rothschild (2009), Martin Creed (2008), Mark Wallinger (2007), Michael Landy (2004), Anya Gallaccio (2002) and Mona Hatoum (2000).

ABOUT MIKE NELSON

Born in Loughborough in 1967, Mike Nelson is best known for his large-scale, site specific sculptural environments that often arise from a period of living and working in a particular location. His works fuse literary, filmic, socio-political and cultural references to create carefully orchestrated tableaux. Nelson has exhibited widely across the world, most recently at the OGR - Officine Grandi Riparazioni, Turin, 2018 and Gwangju Biennale, 2018. He represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 2011 and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2001 and 2007. He became a Royal Academician in 2013 and in 2018 was awarded the Wollaston Award.

ABOUT SOTHEBY'S

Sotheby's has been uniting collectors with world-class works of art since 1744. Sotheby's became the first international auction house when it expanded from London to New York (1955), the first to conduct sales in Hong Kong (1973), India (1992) and France (2001), and the first international fine art auction house in China (2012). Today, Sotheby's presents auctions in 10 different salesrooms, including New York, London, Hong Kong and Paris, and Sotheby's BidNow program allows visitors to view all auctions live online and place bids from anywhere in the world. Sotheby's offers collectors the resources of Sotheby's Financial Services, the world's only full-service art financing company, as well as the collection advisory services of its subsidiary, Art Agency, Partners. Sotheby's presents private sale opportunities in more than 70 categories, including SI2, the gallery arm of Sotheby's Global Fine Art Division, and two retail businesses, Sotheby's Diamonds and Sotheby's Wine. Sotheby's has a global network of 80 offices in 40 countries and is the oldest company listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).