

# GRIMM



*Blind Lion*

**Adam Helms**

Opening: 28 May 2011, from 6–8 pm, Keizersgracht 82. In presence of the artist.

GRIMM is pleased to announce *Blind Lion*, the first solo exhibition of Adam Helms (1974, Tucson, US) in the Netherlands.

The title of the exhibition is derived from one of Helms' most recent works. It refers to 'Marjan, Blind Lion of Afghanistan', one of the two surviving animals in the Kabul Zoo at the time of the US invasion in 2011, after being disfigured by Taliban fighters, attempting to wrestle the lion. Marjan was left wounded, deaf and blind and became a symbol for a country savaged by the dual forces imperialism and fundamentalism.

Helms sees himself as an archivist, collecting and cataloguing seemingly random images, 'coding' and 're-coding' them in drawings by layering, recombining and distorting them into new and iconic forms that are undefined yet recognizable.

The exhibition shows a variety of charcoal drawings, a double-sided light box and a large screen print on felt. The charcoal 'flag' drawings, which have the same dimensions as commonly seen US flags, are an example of Helms' practice of using different sources of iconography that are melded into new symbols. Even though most of the images do not symbolize a specific ideology, the fractured images and proportions of a flag combined, create powerful and heraldic forms. A new symbolic appearance that summon associations to themes of cultural dystopia, colonialism, war and 19th century American art of the frontier.

Helms' screen prints on felt and animal skin from the 'Zombie'-series in the exhibition are a continuation on the subject of identity and appropriation. The zombie as the 'other' or militarized 'neighbor', in portraits that are re-animated from differing contexts yet within similar western histories.

Earthworks/The Ecstatic Experience, is a two-sided light box. One side a collection of photographs dealing with nature and man's quest for identity. The land is explored as an archive of images. On the other side a group of images relating quite literally to a sense of induced spirituality or an ecstatic experience; as emotive moments, postures or symbols. Together the collections of images serve like a metaphor for the figure in a landscape.

Adam Helms lives and works in New York. He received the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2010. His work has been exhibited at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and Spain. Helms's work is included in the collections of the Walker Art Center, the Whitney Museum, the Guggenheim Museum and the Dakis Joannou Collection.

The exhibition runs from 28 May – 9 July 2011, Keizersgracht 82, 1015 CT Amsterdam. The gallery is open from Wednesday – Saturday, 12.00 am. – 6.00 pm. For more information, please contact: +31 (0) 20 6752465 or [info@grimmgallery.com](mailto:info@grimmgallery.com)