

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

GAVIN TURK

Water Biscuit

in THE BOX

22 January - 13 February 2016



Gavin Turk, *Half and Half*, 2015
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 28 x 40 cm

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is pleased to present a new project in The Box by YBA Gavin Turk. Running from 22 January 2015 to 13 February 2016, the project, *Water Biscuit* (2010), will be accompanied by the release of a new limited edition print, *Half and Half* (2015).

Half way down (or up) a classic half-pint pub glass, a circular biscuit is stuck flat across its diameter. The thickness of the glass adds an invisible, internal edge, allowing the biscuit to seemingly float. This visual effect provokes the viewer to imagine the surface of the biscuit as that of a liquid's meniscus. The two objects powerfully expose themselves through a formal balancing act, serving to challenge each other's everyday functions; the glass becomes an eccentric vitrine, whilst the biscuit becomes a mere place-marker.

The work subliminally points to the old adage where people describe glasses as being half full or half empty depending on their positivity. Whilst the diameter of the biscuit happens to place the biscuit at exactly half way, the sides of the glass fan out, creating an optical illusion suggesting that it is nearer the top.

The water biscuit, made with minimal ingredients of flour and water, is also known as a ship's biscuit or hardtack (*tack* being a slang-word meaning food). This was developed by the British Navy as a kind of long lasting bread to provide sustenance. The fact that the glass cannot be used to drink liquid, and that the biscuit is stuck inside, turns on its head the cliché of people being kept alive on a diet of bread and water.

Gavin Turk's (b. 1967) installations and sculptures deal with issues of authorship, authenticity and identity. Concerned with the 'myth' of the artist and the 'authorship' of a work, Turk's engagement with this modernist, avant-garde debate stretches back to the ready-mades of Marcel Duchamp.

In 1991, the Royal College of Art refused Turk a degree on the basis that his final show, 'Cave', consisted of a whitewashed studio space containing only a blue heritage plaque commemorating his presence 'Gavin Turk worked here 1989-91'. Instantly gaining notoriety through this installation, Turk was spotted by Charles Saatchi and was included in several YBA exhibitions. In 2012, Turk was invited by the RCA to loan the piece back.

Turk has recently been commissioned to make several public sculptures including *Nail*, a 12-metre sculpture at One New Change, next to St Paul's Cathedral, London. In 2013, Prestel published Turk's first major monograph, showcasing more than two decades of his work and in 2014, Trolley Books published 'This Is Not A Book About Gavin Turk' which playfully explores themes associated with the artist's work via thirty notable contributors. He currently has an interventional show at the Freud Museum, London, called 'Wittgenstein's Dream'.

Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-5.

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