

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



THE 14TH FACTORY

GROUNDBREAKING IMMERSIVE
ART EXHIBITION
THE 14TH FACTORY
EXTENDED THROUGH JULY 30TH, 2017
DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND

The landmark exhibition by artist Simon Birch has already welcomed over 65,000 visitors since opening in March



Image (1): Simon Birch and Wing Shya, *The Inhumans*, 2016, Six-channel video. Photographs by Ryan Tyler Martinez.

Images (2) & (3): Simon Birch and KplusK associates, *The Barmecide Feast*, 2017, Wood, steel, acrylic, light, furniture, objets d'art. Photographs by Ryan Tyler Martinez.

Los Angeles – June 29, 2017 - We are pleased to share that due to overwhelming response, *The 14th Factory*, described by the LA Review of Books as “one of the boldest and most visually arresting displays of art seen in Los Angeles in many years,” will extend its popular run through July 30th, 2017. The multimedia art experience, which takes over three acres of an empty industrial complex in Lincoln Heights, Los Angeles, has welcomed over 65,000 visitors since its opening in March. With the contribution of twenty participating artists, Simon Birch has transformed the location into an immersive environment of fourteen interlinked spaces comprised of video, installation, sculpture, paintings, drawings, music and performance. To participate in the experience, general entry may be reserved online (\$18), or secured at the door (\$22). Special rates are available for local residents, children, students, seniors, current or former members of the military and groups. The exhibition is on view five days a week at the following times:

Wednesday: 11am - 6pm

Thursday: 11am - 8pm

Friday: 11am - 8pm

Saturday: 10am - 10pm

Sunday: 10am - 8pm

Closed Mondays and Tuesdays

Over the last twenty years, Simon Birch has produced a substantive body of work that explores the theme of connection and dislocation at varying scales: from intimate oil paintings to multiple-media installation pieces and interactive architectural spaces that viewers can enter. His protagonists appear torn between attraction and repulsion as they fly or fall, their bodies twisting in a gravitational vortex. These shifting symmetries of power and vulnerability are particularly evident in Birch's latest work - *The 14th Factory*.

The title refers to the Chinese trading houses or hongs in a district known as the Thirteen Factories, where the Qing Emperor had permitted foreigners to establish bases from the mid-eighteenth century onwards – up until the outbreak of the two Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860). The defeated Qing was obliged to cede Hong Kong to the British and to allow for the establishment of extraterritorial treaty ports, quasi-colonial enclaves in China that were open to free trade and administered by Western nationals.

For Birch, who arrived in Hong Kong from the United Kingdom in 1997 amid the handover of Hong Kong to China, the Thirteen Factories are emblematic of a world riven with strife and divided up into competitive nation-states. In late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Western paintings, Canton was depicted as a line of trading stations on the river front, with each building identified by its national flag: British, American, French, Dutch, Austrian, Swedish, Spanish, and Danish. In contrast, Birch's Fourteenth Factory is imagined as an all-encompassing space, where differences are accommodated. On one level, this is a liberating vision that affirms a transcendent humanity. On another level, however, Birch concedes that the borderless world he conjures is itself the product of historical violence.

This violence is especially evident in a work titled *Clear Air Turbulence*, where visitors walk around airplane tails salvaged from a dumpsite in the Mojave Desert and placed in a pool of black water. Birch's installation suggests a lethal subversion of flight; the wreckage no longer belongs to air, but has found a home now in earth and water. From emblems of global connectivity, airplanes have become totems of an unsettling rootedness and alienation. Like the monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which precipitates human evolution from ape to space-child, the tails form a monument that marks out the dark edges of another world. Birch consciously alludes to Kubrick's movie at several points in the show. While *The Barmecide Feast* presents a replica from the set of the movie, the dimensions of the dark pool in *Clear Air Turbulence* are identical to those of Kubrick's monolith.

The world becomes intelligible when it is cut up into manageable portions. In the end, Birch suggests, this forceful framing of the real may not be any different from the arbitrary borders of the nation-state; or, for that matter, the concrete walls of capsule homes in a city like Hong Kong, where lives are squeezed into quasi-industrial conformity. The video installation *Tannhauser* provides a poetic reflection on these anonymous, vertical communities. The camera moves across the monochrome facades of Hong Kong buildings, offering fleeting visions of lives fitted into identical units.

In *The 14th Factory*, Birch connects a personal lifeworld – a journey from self-confessed 'hooligan' to self-taught artist – with a global story of entanglement scored to the brutal rhythms of capital expansion and contraction, making collaborative art that breaks down borders even as it recognizes the tug of tribal belonging.

Simon Birch is a British-born artist living and working in Hong Kong. A painter known for the kinetic, cinematic quality of his figurative works, Birch is also naturally attracted to the medium of film. He has been the conceptual and creative force behind large-scale, collaborative, and site-specific multimedia projects integrating paintings with film, installation, sculpture, and performance housed in specifically configured spaces, including *Azhanti High Lightning* (Singapore 2007), *Outside Context Problem* (Hong Kong, 2008), *HOPE & GLORY: A Conceptual Circus* (Hong Kong and Beijing, 2010) and *Daydreaming With...The Hong Kong Edition* (Hong Kong, 2012), each involving collaboration across cultures as well as media. Birch's works have been exhibited in solo shows in Beijing, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Miami, and Singapore, and in group shows at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, Haunch of Venison, London, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. He is the recipient of the Louis Vuitton Asian Art Prize and the Sovereign Asian Art Prize.

The complete list of collaborators, which forms a global community of artists from China, Hong Kong, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, include: Simon Birch, Cang Xin, Devin Liston, Dominique Fung, Doug Foster, Eric Hu, Gary Gunn, Gloria Yu, Li Wei, Lily Kwong, Movana Chen, Paul Kember, Penny Rimbaud, Peter Yuill, Prodip Leung, Sara Tse, Scott Carthy, Scott Sporleder, Stanley Wong, Wing Shya, Yang Zhichao.

The 14th Factory
On view March 11 - July 30, 2017
440 N. Ave 19
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Monday: Closed
Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday: 11am - 6pm
Thursday: 11am - 8pm
Friday: 11am - 8pm
Saturday: 10am - 10pm
Sunday: 10am - 8pm

Participation and Donation: \$18 in advance, \$22 at the door. Local residents, youth, students, seniors, military and group special access options are also available. Please visit The14thFactory.com for more information.

Non-profit, community groups, and schools, discounted with advance reservation. Please contact info@the14thfactory.com.

For press inquires please contact press@the14thfactory.com

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14th Factory Foundation is an independent, 501(c)(3) non-profit global artist collective whose mission is to create large-scale contemporary art experiences that act as vehicles for social impact.