

Elmgreen & Dragset: This Is How We Bite Our Tongue

27 September 2018 – 13 January 2019

Galleries 1, 8 and 9

Supported by Phillips

The first major overview of artist duo **Elmgreen & Dragset** in the UK combines a large-scale site-specific installation to be unveiled in September 2018 with six new sculptures and 29 works created over 20 years of the artists' collaboration.

Michael Elmgreen (b. 1961, Copenhagen, Denmark) and **Ingar Dragset** (b. 1969, Trondheim, Norway) have worked together since 1995 and are now based in Berlin. Their beguiling spatial scenarios explore social and sexual politics and unveil the power structures embedded in the everyday. Through displacement and alteration they challenge the architecture of their exhibition venues allowing visitors to re-experience domestic and institutional settings.

Commissioned especially for the Whitechapel Gallery, Elmgreen & Dragset's immersive new installation relates to the gentrification of London's East End and points to a loss of faith in public space in an era of austerity. Transforming the ground-floor Gallery, this remarkable environment will transport the visitor to an alternative civic space permeated by abandonment.

Elmgreen & Dragset said: "*This is How We Bite Our Tongue is an exhibition about emotions held inside, not said out loud. It is about withdrawal and resignation, about absence and impermanence, the feeling of loss, of losing agency as well as community. But it is also about reconciliation and resilience*". The artists draw inspiration from the 19th-century Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864 – 1916), who subtly turned his depictions of domestic spaces into psychological dramas of bourgeois repression.

One gallery is dedicated to *Self Portraits* – monumental labels carved in marble or painted on canvas – that pay tribute to works of art that have inspired the artists and shaped their identity. Their tributes to artists ranging from Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) to Mark Morrisroe (1959-1989) are accompanied by a desk complete with a diary and a bottle of whiskey. *The Bottle and the Book* (2015) invites visitors to break common gallery rules by sitting on the artwork and taking a drink.

This Is How We Bite Our Tongue culminates with a display of figurative sculptures presented in a chapel-like atmosphere, much like relics or icons. According to the artists, they 'speak of misguided reverence and of judgement, lust and fear'.

Press Release

.....

Whitechapel Gallery
77–82 Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

T +44 (0)20 7522 7888
F +44 (0)20 7539 3340

whitechapelgallery.org

Whitechapel Gallery Trustee Limited is a private limited company, registered in England and Wales, registered company no. 4093862 and the corporate trustee of Whitechapel Gallery, registered charity no. 312162. VAT no. 863 586 582.

Some sculptures question traditional perceptions of masculinity: in *One Day* (2015) a young boy gazes at a rifle in a display case; while *Invisible* (2017) depicts a boy hiding inside a mantelpiece. The housemaid is a recurring figure in the artists' oeuvre; here *Pregnant White Maid* (2017) might serve as a symbol of abuse or bear hope of the future. In Elmgreen & Dragset's uncanny universe, we will never know for sure.

Iwona Blazwick, Director, Whitechapel Gallery, said "*Having sited a monumental boy on a rocking horse among the admirals of Trafalgar Square, revealed a failed modernist architect's flat inside the V&A and perched a vulture in the trees of Regent's Park, Elmgreen & Dragset will make visible the disappearance of civic space while also offering an overview of two decades of their uncanny sculpture*".

Dina Amin, Phillips' Head of 20th Century & Contemporary Art Department, Europe, said: "*This Is How We Bite Our Tongue is the first major overview for artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset and Phillips is thrilled to support Whitechapel Gallery for this widely anticipated exhibition. At Phillips, we continue to champion and support the work of artists whose transformative works challenge and excite the imagination. Our goal is to foster a new dialogue about artists like Elmgreen & Dragset and we look forward to welcoming both new and longstanding admirers of theirs to this exhibition.*"

Notes to Editors

- The exhibition is curated by Laura Smith, Curator at the Whitechapel Gallery with Habda Rashid, Assistant Curator at the Whitechapel Gallery
- The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated publication including an interview between Iwona Blazwick, Director, Whitechapel Gallery and Elmgreen & Dragset as well as contributions from Ann Lui, Assistant Professor, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Minna Moore Ede, Associate Curator, National Gallery, London; Laura Smith, Curator, Whitechapel Gallery; and Habda Rashid, Assistant Curator, Whitechapel Gallery.

About Elmgreen & Dragset

Michael Elmgreen (born 1961 in Copenhagen, Denmark) and Ingar Dragset (born 1969 in Trondheim, Norway) are based in Berlin and have worked together as an artist duo since 1995. They have held numerous solo exhibitions in art institutions worldwide, including Museum Haus Lange, Kunstmuseen Krefeld (2017); FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2016); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2016); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2016); PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2015); Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (2014); Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2014); Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2011); ZKM Museum of Modern Art, Karlsruhe (2010); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (2009); The Power Plant, Toronto (2006); Serpentine Gallery, London (2006); Tate Modern, London (2004); and Kunsthalle Zürich (2001). Their work has been included in the Istanbul (2013, 2011, 2001), Liverpool (2012), Performa 11 (New York, 2011), Singapore

(2011), Moscow (2011, 2007), Venice (2009, 2003), Gwangju (2006, 2002), São Paulo (2002), and Berlin (1998) biennials.

In 2005 the artists installed the sculpture Prada Marfa, a replica Prada store, in the Texan desert. In 2009 they received a special mention for their exhibition “The Collectors” in the Nordic and Danish Pavilions at the 53rd Venice Biennale. The artists were shortlisted for the Hugo Boss Prize, Guggenheim Museum, New York (2000) and won the Preis der Nationalgalerie, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2002). In 2012 they were selected for London’s Fourth Plinth Commission in Trafalgar Square, and in summer 2016 Public Art Fund presented their sculpture “Van Gogh’s Ear” at Rockefeller Center in New York City. Elmgreen & Dragset curated the 15th Istanbul Biennial in 2017.

About Whitechapel Gallery

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see. It is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London’s cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world’s most vibrant contemporary art quarter.

About Phillips

Phillips is a leading global platform for buying and selling 20th and 21st century art and design. With dedicated expertise in the areas of 20th Century and Contemporary Art, Design, Photographs, Editions, Watches, and Jewellery, Phillips offers professional services and advice on all aspects of collecting. Auctions and exhibitions are held at salerooms in New York, London, Geneva, and Hong Kong, while clients are further served through representative offices based throughout Europe, the United States and Asia. Phillips also offers an online auction platform accessible anywhere in the world, and is committed to supporting contemporary arts and culture through a worldwide programme of Arts Partnerships. Visit Phillips at: www.phillips.com. For press information about Phillips contact Katie Carder, Head of Press, Europe, T +44 207 901 7983 | E kcarder@phillips.com

PHILLIPS

With additional support from:

Victoria Miro, London / Venice.

The Elmgreen & Dragset Exhibition Circle: Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip Aarons, Massimo de Carlo, Milan/London/Hong Kong, Mimi Dusselier, Füsün & Faruk Eczacıbaşı, König Galerie, Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Perrotin Gallery.

Danish Arts Foundation, New Carlsberg Foundation, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, The Royal Norwegian Embassy in London.

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Nearest London Underground Stations: Aldgate East, Liverpool Street, Tower Gateway DLR

T + 44 (0) 20 7522 7888 | E info@whitechapelgallery.org | W whitechapelgallery.org

Whitechapel Gallery Press Information

For more information, interviews and images, contact:

Lucy Hawes, Senior Media Relations Manager

T +44 (0)20 7522 7871 | E lucyhawes@whitechapelgallery.org

Anna Wates, Media Relations Assistant

T +44 (0)20 7522 3360 | E annawates@whitechapelgallery.org