

Soft Opening

Wilson Oryema & Harley Weir
"rubbish_1"

8 June - 1 July 2018

Unit 7, Piccadilly Circus Underground Station

"Pollution brings a foul breeze"

Wilson Oryema

Since 2015, Harley Weir has digitally archived an expanding collection of photographs of trash. As the photographer travelled, the series became an obsessive amassment of imagery of detritus strewn across the globe. Eventually, Weir launched an Instagram account that over the course of the two years that followed, became an easy and temporarily satisfying outlet for this imagery. Before @rubbish_1 was hacked, deleted and since replaced with its latest version, @rubbish_1.2, it's content was unforgivingly gruesome, publicising everything from rotting flowers still nestled in their shiny wrapping, to bottles filled with yellowing piss and worse. Emblematic of a growing concern with the impenetrable glut of plastic waste that we produce on a daily basis, Weir's project soon began to implicate her own lifestyle. For Weir, photography represents her means to curiously learn about her surroundings and understand the world, so this ongoing series enables the artist to acknowledge her own footprint, alongside a clear agenda to generate a more widespread awareness about plastic waste.

Embodying a similar core ethos, Wilson Oryema's poems seek to illuminate some of the underlying thought patterns which dominate and inform our habitual attitudes towards waste and consumption more generally. The pair first collaborated when Oryema archived for Weir, whose work soon began to inform his own artistic practice. Easily relatable, Oryema's poems address how our problematic relationship with consumption infiltrates many of our daily behaviours, not only around waste but with food, clothing and other people. In his poem, "Consuming Relationships," Wilson writes "Do you savour every aspect or eat hurriedly to start sooner on the next one?" Equally concerned with engendering awareness, Wilson proposes that the problem lies with the human condition rather than solely with the use of a single material. If we are to effect a change in our plastic wastage, we must begin with our own psychologies and consider our common repetitive behavioural patterns.

Paired with Wilson's words, this exhibition seeks to make evident how easy it would be for anybody to cut down their plastic intake and begin to embolden a less wasteful lifestyle. It may be difficult to generate zero waste, but how hard can it really be to have some effect? Weir makes a convincing argument:

"People forget that doing every little helps... It's important to start by changing one thing in your life: even simply by taking your groceries home from the supermarket without plastic bags. This way, during your lifespan alone you will save thousands of bags from being used and discarded. Repeating one positive action for a long time will save so much. Everyone making a little effort will make a difference, and together this can elicit such a huge change."

Wilson Oryema (b. 1993 London) is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in London. Since his first solo exhibition "Wait" at Doomed Gallery, London (2017), Oryema has exhibited work at "Dance Freedom" at V3 Gallery, London (2017) and "I Am Fine" at Copeland Gallery, London (2017). He performed in Asad Raza's commission for Frieze Projects in 2015 and for Lina Hermsdorf at the Städelschule, Frankfurt in 2016. His work has been featured in the two latest issues of Glamcult and The Fine Print Magazine. In April Oryema directed his first short film, "Boxing Day Blues" (2018). He released his first book, the self-published "Wait" in 2017 and a sequel is due for release next year.

Harley Weir (b. 1988 Roehampton, Surrey) lives and works in London. In 2010 she graduated from Central St Martins with a BA in Fine Art. Her first solo exhibition was "Boundaries" at Foam, Amsterdam (2016/17). Last year she exhibited work at The Belly and the Members, curated by Antonia Marsh at Cob Gallery, London (2017). She has published three books: "Homes" with Loose Joints (2017), "Paintings" with Loose Joints (2017) and most recently, "Function" with Baron (2018).

To accompany the exhibition, Weir will print a series of nine unique hand prints and Oryema will be publishing a chapbook of new poetry with Soft Opening. For image requests or any sales enquiries please contact Antonia: am@antoniamarsh.club. The exhibition will coincide with World Ocean Day and a % of print sales will go towards the Great British Beach Clean, a project initiated by the Marine Conservation Society. Weir will be hosting a self-organised beach clean on Saturday 9 June. For more information please contact info@softopening.london.