

Edward Rollitt

To Dwell In Dust

14 September – 26 October 2024

New Art Projects is delighted to present the first solo show by British Artist Edward Rollitt who will present a new series of large-scale photographs, sculptures, and installations. As a starting point for his new works, Rollitt has looked at the convergence of antique objects and the fabrication of identity. Interested in the psychology of space, he explores the potential for objects to signify associations of wealth, class, social status, and lineage. The son of an antique dealer, Rollitt assumes the dual role of participant and viewer to contemplate how the aesthetics of ancestry can function to validate fictional histories and evoke a privileged, yet problematic past. An introspective undertaking, Rollitt replicates this process within his work, inventing fictional characters and building fictional histories for them, and creating places and spaces that contain their characteristics.

His new body of work is made up of a series of containers or constructed rooms that are fictitious, historically-inspired spaces. Constructed to scale, these containers observe both the psychology and atmosphere of space - the memory, emotion, and sensations that perpetuate amongst layers of dust, dirt and grime. Working with an evolving collection of antiques, Rollitt exploits the material history of these objects to enhance the legitimacy of his interiors; subsequently, these fictional spaces create the context for the character who lives, or has lived within. A broken glass, a dishevelled bed, a burnt cloak: all act as signifiers of a life lived. A definitive narrative, however, is obstructed by the artist's modification of these objects. Chair legs are burnt, cabinets dissected and reassembled, doors bashed in. The alteration of objects enhances the narrative intrigue and adds to the uncanny atmosphere of these environments.

The selection of photographs, installations, and sculptures, on view at New Art Projects, are theatrical, and function like stage sets where the lead actor is momentarily off stage. Redolent with an air of the dramatic, the works in this exhibition underscore the artificiality of our constructed environments. Observing the nuances of English history and offering us a portal into his complex world, Rollitt's rooms are inhabited, tangible spaces that are both provocative and visceral. Unsettling, they dance between the beautiful and the disturbing, countering the sterility of our contemporary environments with their dirt and dense air, interspersed with scents of perfume and decay. Through their fictitious narratives, they extend beyond the purely observational, these scenes become psychological vignettes; deeply evocative, they both generate and encase atmosphere.

Notes for editors:

Based between London and Hampshire, Edward Rollitt (b. 1998), graduated from the Royal College of Art with a postgraduate degree in sculpture (2023). Working from an old agricultural barn in the Hampshire countryside, Rollitt's practice is concerned with themes of objecthood, material history and characterisation.

Previous group exhibitions include, *Penumbra Zone*, Gallery 46, London, UK (2022), and *Wild Stone*, Van Gogh House, London, UK (2022). In 2023, Ed Rollitt was a UK New Artist of the Year finalist and exhibited his work *Lucei de Yavington* (2023) at Saatchi Gallery. In 2024 he was Longlisted for the Aesthetica Art Prize and exhibited as part of the exhibition at York Art Gallery.