

# FELIX & SPEAR

Modern British and Contemporary Art

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Press Release  
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John Atkin MA (RCA) FRSS

## *Vanishing Point*

2 Feb – 9 Mar 2019

**Opening Reception (RSVP essential): Friday 1 February, 6-8 pm**

Ealing, London W5, January 8, 2019 – Felix & Spear gallery is delighted to present 'Vanishing Point' by John Atkin - an exhibition of studio sculptures and wall based artworks.

### Vanishing Point

Atkin trained as a Painter at Leicester Polytechnic (1978 – 1981) before embarking on a 3-year MA in Sculpture at the RCA (1982 -1985). At this time the Sculpture School was located in South Kensington, adjacent to the Natural History Museum, V&A, and Science Museum. The spacious studio accommodation for 5 or 6 students in each year group housed in black prefabricated huts, architecturally awry with the grandiose architecture of Queens Gate SW7.

The landscape of his native heath in Teesdale (Co, Durham) was the focus for much of his early inspiration, alongside the industrial interface between the land and the sea in the North East of England. His early work charted journeys throughout this landscape, capturing the transformational qualities of seasons, and particularly snowfall, which altered & simplified the rural landscape in and around Barnard Castle into a tapestry of shapes and planes, challenging the viewers perspective of a seemingly infinite landscape delineated by drystone walls and field boundaries that characterised much of this region known as the Land of the Prince Bishops.

The seeds of his new Vanishing Point series of wall-based artworks are evident in those very early works where he explored spatial form and separation of picture planes. His early influences such as Frank Stella (Exotic Birds) and Richard Diebenkorn (Ocean Park), as well as Mondrian's drawings of trees are discernable in the Vanishing Point series of artworks. However, he has now deployed a distinct physicality to the artworks through the use of collage alongside materials such as Perspex. His use of digital media together with traditional methods of practice has permitted an experimental approach to the application of colour and form, used in preparatory drawing and prints.

The notion of landscape is palpable in the Vanishing Point series of artworks, and although they are not studies of specific locations, they are a distillation of memories associated with landscape which continues to influence his studio practice.



## **About John Atkin**

Since leaving the RCA in London, where Henry Moore (who Atkin met in 1982) funded Atkin throughout his MA Sculpture course where Philip King PPRA was Professor of Sculpture, he has exhibited his work worldwide: e.g. the Guggenheim Museum in Italy, Museum of Modern Art Melbourne and New Orleans Museum of Art. Atkin's global Public Art practice can be seen throughout the UK & Ireland: and globally in countries such as, China, USA, Australia, South Korea, and Canada.

Atkin has been invited to present *keynote papers* at a number of conferences worldwide including the *16<sup>th</sup> China Sculpture Forum*. *DIAOSU- National Sculpture Magazine of China*, where he represented the Royal Society of Sculptors, and also *Sculpture by the Sea Symposium* at the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, Australia: International Sculpture Centre Conference, Pittsburgh USA, and most recently at the China Academy of Art Hangzhou, Curating in Action-Art as Social Practice.

In 2008 his seminal artwork "Strange Meeting", was commissioned by Beijing Municipal Government, to celebrate the cultural arm of the Olympics "One World One Dream" exhibition in Olympic Park, Beijing. This 27-ton marble & granite artwork formed part of an exhibition of twenty-six artists selected from a global application of 2600 people. His recent appointment, Honorary Fellow, National Academy of Sculpture, Beijing has stimulated widespread interest in his work, which has prompted numerous opportunities for his work in China. In addition, Atkin was the UK Representative for the EU-China touring exhibition, "Inspiring Culture", which toured nine major museums in China 2012-2018 and eight venues throughout Europe.

Atkin has recently completed a landmark Public Art project for the City of Toronto: a large-scale installation artwork entitled **Access to Justice**, which interprets one aspect of the Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms.

His studio practice continues to be the vital element in the development of his work that explores notions of human identity through abstract form. His studio-based research embraces several aspects of cross-disciplinary partnerships, which focus on articulating visual concepts of heritage & culture within the context of re-shaping public space.

Atkins' academic background as Reader in Fine Art at Loughborough University has enabled him to develop collaborative research across diverse departments, such as Chemistry, Civil & Build Engineering, Sports Technology, Mechanical Engineering, Architecture, as well as the Design School. This collaborative approach to Fine Art practice has enabled fruitful interactions for colleagues as well as students and is central to his research-informed-teaching philosophy.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Gallery address: **Felix & Spear, 71 St. Mary's Road, London W5 5RG**

Exhibition Opening Hours: Tuesday – Friday 10.30am – 6.00pm, Saturday 11.00am – 3.00pm

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Cameron Amiri 020 8566 1574 / [info@felixandspear.com](mailto:info@felixandspear.com)

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