

MONA



EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Toby Ziegler

Your shadow rising

4 November 2018 - 25 March 2019 at Mona

“When I left art college, I was pretty disillusioned with the idea of being an artist. I started to make art in private. I think at the time I wasn’t even convinced that it was art. I wasn’t quite sure what the function of it was.”

We first met Toby Ziegler around the time Mona opened—a British painter and sculptor with a captivating process and body of work. He wasn’t ‘quite sure what the function’ of his art was, but sought to find a way to make it ‘that seemed viable’ in the new century, a time in which the master narratives of history (including art history) were being pulled apart.

“I felt disillusioned with romantic associations of being a painter. I wanted to try to make a new way of practicing for myself. I started by doing something very mechanical, which was just to do with geometry.”

He used computers to model spaces and map surfaces with pattern, and re-worked the images by hand.

“It was a way of trying to stamp out any idiosyncrasy or gesture, and just do something purely mechanical. In a way I think I was punishing myself... Very slowly, I was able to start considering mark making, and the hand, and human intuition. These things started to seep through.”

And now, the best part of a decade later, we are excited to have Toby at Mona to show a new body of work, one that follows on from his preoccupation with long standing themes (the hand of the artist, trauma, transformation; in this instance, through fire), and that represents a culmination of his process. This process involves a constant push-and-pull between classical and digitally generated imagery, and mechanical and intuitive modes of expression; between creation and destruction; the autonomy of art making, and the ‘punishment’ it brings to bear as well. There are paintings, sculptures, a video work, and ‘a lump of volcanic rock’. We are looking forward to learning more about how Toby finds a place for himself and his art in a world so saturated with images that they leak out all over the place, in ways that can be fascinating, liberating, or grotesque.

And as for the ‘function’ of such art? We don’t know either. But we’re glad someone else is just as perplexed, and drawn in by the problem (and the wonder) as we are.

Written by Elizabeth Pearce, Senior Writer and Research Curator, Mona