

MUMMERY+SCHNELLE

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Press Release

Runo Lagomarsino
Las Casas is Not a Home

4 February – 14 March 2009
Open Tuesday – Saturday 10am-6pm

Mummery + Schnelle are pleased to announce the first solo exhibition by Runo Lagomarsino in the UK.

Las Casas is Not a Home brings together several recent works concerning Lagomarsino's analysis and re-contextualization of historical colonial discourse and attributions of language and identity. The starting point is the debate in 1550 between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda concerning the moral issues at stake in the Spanish Conquest of the 'New World'. The theologian Sepulveda argued that Spanish colonization was an attack against barbarism, and believed it was the Spaniards God-given duty to bring universal values (Catholicism) to savage natives with cruel customs. Las Casas – the first fierce critic of colonialism – abhorred the mistreatment of the indigenous population, and became an outspoken advocate for the rights of the Indians, most effectively through his vivid firsthand description of witnessed atrocities, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*.

The exhibition creates a narrative in multiple parts that unfolds the links between this fraught colonial past and its repercussions in our own equally fraught geopolitical present. This narrative, a re-examination of history presented in drawings, slide projections, collages and sculptures, reflects upon how historical processes have influenced the way we read and re-read history. The title of the exhibition plays with the notion of home and of placement using the double meaning of Las Casas both as a name and also the word for *homes* in Spanish, and Lagomarsino explores this idea of home in political and geographical contexts. The works reflect the fragility of positions, geographical movements and constructions: one of the drawings states in a deadpan fashion, *If you don't know what the south is – It's simply because you are from the north*. Another work, a slide projection of text projected on a sculptural model of a commercial billboard, announces *We support*, leading the viewer to wonder who the 'we' are and what in fact they're supporting. The viewer enters from an outsider's perspective, peering into the in-between layers of the narratives, identifying the emblems and metaphors inscribed in words, while the tensions and questions of universalisms in the present reveal the links, shifts and resistance to the past.

Runo Lagomarsino was born in 1977, and graduated from Malmo Art Academy, Sweden in 2003. He has participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program (NY, 2007–08) and the IASPIS residency at Platform Garanti (Istanbul, 2006). Lagomarsino recently exhibited in *The 7th Gwangju Biennale, Annual Report: A Year in Exhibitions* (Gwangju, 2008), *AutoStop* (Malmo Konsthall, 2008), *Ours: Democracy in the Age of Branding* (Vera List Center, New York, 2008), *Imagine Action* (Lisson Gallery, London, 2007), *Ground Lost* (Galerija Nova, Zagreb, 2007) and *Heterotopias*, Thessaloniki Biennalen (Thessaloniki, 2007).

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Next exhibition at Mummery + Schnelle: Maria Chevska, 18 March – 2 May 2009