



# Kunstraum Miles Thurlow *Variable Foot*

20 APRIL – 25 MAY 2013

OPENING FRIDAY 19 APRIL, 6 TILL 9PM

In 'Variable Foot', Miles Thurlow presents three sculptural works in epoxy resin, including the major new work 'All The Gods' (2013) made especially for Kunstraum. The exhibition borrows its title from the American poet William Carlos Williams (1883–1963) whose seemingly contradictory idea of the 'variable foot' described a sense of measure in poetry which has no fixed reference points. The apparent contradictions, tensions and polarised positions within cultural production make up the landscape within which Thurlow's sculptures take their irreverent stances.

'All The Gods' is an epoxy resin casting of a provisional assemblage made from two monolithic blocks of polystyrene. Down the sides of this edifice come a few trails and blobs of expanding foam, painstakingly reproduced within the resin. The work makes a playful reference both to Richard Serra's monumental steel forms and to renaissance statuary – the blocks sitting off-parallel obliquely evoke the classical device of 'contraposto'. By touching on either end of a historic narrative of sculpture, Thurlow positions his own practice in a critical relationship with the past, while acknowledging his continuity with it.

Thurlow's works inhabit and problematise the ways in which cultural values are signified. 'All The Gods' approaches two poles of this signification: At the one end is the permanence and inherent value of materials or labour; at the other the transience of materials, in which objects are simply stand-ins for momentary thought. The work's underlying form – two polystyrene blocks and expanding foam – points to one end of this spectrum, it is a coincidence of materials which is necessarily light and momentary. But by rendering this moment in resin, Thurlow spins the work towards a very different register, towards material value associated with the foundry, and the labour value of intricate craftsmanship. But in each aspect there is a twist: the resin cast has associations of mass production of action figures, rather than the grandeur of bronze; and hours of labour go to produce an indistinguishable replica of something that was produced from inexpensive materials in a moment.

Like 'All The Gods', 'hrh' (2010) and 'Small Abyss' (2011) solidify in resin the momentary coming together of materials. 'hrh' is a cast from a plaster bust of an ancient Greek thinker, built up with gouged hand-fuls of clay. The title, which could refer to 'his/her royal highness' or else to an exclamation of dumfounded confusion, is suggestive of a schoolboy prank on the figure of establishment. In the same way Thurlow's use of ubiquitous synthesised materials such as polyurethane and epoxy resin acts to neutralise the grandiose associations of the materials from which this sculptural moment was produced.

Just as William Carlos Williams' poetry eschewed the high-minded classical traditions in favour of the local and colloquial, 'Small Abyss' refigures an everyday studio object into a site of profound knowledge, and plays with the romantic notion of the artist entering the unknown in a search for truth. The work is a resin cast – with meticulous trompe l'oeil detailing – of Thurlow's clay bucket at the end of a day's work, the interior landscape of which was sculpted blindly not as an investigative process, but as a means to an end. Throughout, the works in 'Variable Foot' conspire to conflate the poles of 'high' and 'low' culture and to push together the ordinary and the esoteric.

**About Miles Thurlow:**

Miles Thurlow was born in Colchester, Essex in 1975 and studied Sculpture at Loughborough College of Art & Design (1995–1997) and at Newcastle University (1998 – 2000). He has exhibited his work widely including Glasgow International, Baltic, Gateshead; Royal Standard, Liverpool; Malgras Naudet, Manchester; Edinburgh Art Festival. Miles is Co – Founder and Director of Workplace Gallery in Gateshead. He lives and works in Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead.

**About kunstraum:**

Kunstraum is a London-based project space with a focus on solo exhibitions of artists based in London's neighbouring cities in Europe and the UK. Kunstraum, literally meaning 'art room' in German, seeks to form new relationships with the interconnected art scenes of Europe and the rest of the country.

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Thursday to Saturday 12:00 – 18:00