

Press Release

Ed Atkins

11 June – 25 August 2014
Serpentine Sackler Gallery

Realised with the generous support of the Lars Windhorst Foundation



Image credits:

Stills from the three-channel HD video *Ribbons* (2014)
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One of the most prominent artists of his generation, Ed Atkins works primarily with High Definition video and text, exploiting and subverting the conventions of moving image and literature. Centred around an augmented and appended version of the new multi-screen video work *Ribbons*, Atkins's exhibition transforms the Serpentine Sackler Gallery into a submersive environment of syncopated sounds, bodies and spaces. This is his largest solo exhibition in a UK public institution to date.

Ribbons (2014) will have its UK premiere at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery in a site-specific adaptation. Presented alongside installations of text and images, accompanying videos and tourettic interjections, the exhibition will

Serpentine Gallery
Kensington Gardens
London W2 3XA

Serpentine Sackler Gallery
West Carriage Drive
Kensington Gardens
London W2 2AR

T +44 (0)20 7402 6075
W serpentinegalleries.org

underscore the ambivalent relationship that exists between real and virtual objects; between real and virtual conditions.

Ed Atkins, said:

"The Sackler exhibition will re-possess some sort of sub-horror genre; the old powder rooms, haunted by the phantom smell of gunpowder, paranoia and anticipation of violence, will emphasise a particularly phantasmatic aspect of *Ribbons*; the protagonist's questionable corporeality, their presence, their performance of loss and monstrosity"

Sounds from a suite of synchronised projections positioned throughout the Gallery will lead the visitor through the space, with glimpses of song, swells of orchestra, murmuring voices and waves of sub-bass. *Ribbons* is part musical, part horror, and part melodrama; Bach's *Erbarme Dich* and Randy Newman's *I think it's going to rain today* are two of the songs featured. Naked, lonely and misanthropic, the palpable melancholy of Atkins's Computer Generated avatar hero is 'rendered' as HD graphic, troll, voyeur and, perhaps, artist.

Julia Peyton-Jones, Director, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-Director, Serpentine Galleries, said:

"In ghostly echoes of a world where the digital has crept under our skin and into our dreams, Atkins's seamless mix of video, audio and text coalesce into a deeply visceral examination of the contemporary experience of physical and digital corporeality. While flickering HD screens and lonely avatars dominate the Serpentine Sackler Gallery this summer, this exhibition by Ed Atkins promises to be anything but two dimensional."

Atkins's work draws attention to the way in which we perceive, communicate and filter information. His videos combine layered images with incomplete or interrupted excerpts of singing, speech, subtitles and handwriting. Working with a specialist in computer generated animation, Atkins exploits the hyperreal surfaces produced by new software systems to create complex, nightmarish environments populated by virtual characters, avatars of ambiguous provenance and desires. Atkins has described the male figure that appears in these works as 'a character that is literally a model, is demonstrably empty – a surrogate and a vessel'. Despite the emotive music and poetic syntax of the protagonists, their emptiness serves to remind the three-dimensional, warm-bodied viewer of their own physicality.

The experience of the physical body in Atkins's show will be contrasted with and complemented by the durational performance being undertaken by Marina Abramović, whose exhibition runs concurrently at the Serpentine Gallery.

For press information contact:

Miles Evans, milese@serpentinegalleries.org, +44 (0)20 7298 1544

Press images at serpentinegalleries.org/about/press-page

Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London W2 3XA

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Notes to Editors:

Atkins (b. 1982) has exhibited internationally, including recent solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Zurich (2014); Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin (2013); MoMA PS1, New York (2013); Chisenhale Gallery, London (2012); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2012); Tate Britain, London (2011); Transmission, Glasgow (2010); and Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2010). Atkins performed the critically acclaimed [DEPRESSION](#) at the

Serpentine Memory Marathon in 2012, for which a digitally altered voice narrated a beautifully crafted story of the brain as it translated melancholy through electronic sounds, blue screen and microphone. www.vimeo.com/61089836

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