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Press release

Fire Under Snow: Darren Almond

18 January – 30 March 2008, preview 17 January 6 – 8 pm

Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is pleased to present *Fire Under Snow*, a one-person exhibition devoted to recent works by the British artist, Darren Almond. This will be Almond's most extensive exhibition to date in a UK institution and will comprise two films, a group of large black and white photographs, and a wall sculpture.

Almond's work takes as its subject matter the recurring themes of time, memory, human labour and exploitation in various parts of the world. His films, photographs and installations deal with both the private and collective human experience, with global and intimate concerns, in modes that are both analytical and emotional.

At Parasol unit, Almond will present the films *In the Between* (2006) and *Bearing* (2007), a new wall sculpture *Tide* (2008), and photographs from the *Night + Fog* series (2007).

Tide, 2008, is a new large-scale wall sculpture made of one master clock and about 600 slave clocks. Each time a digital number on the master clock flips over to mark the passing of another minute or another hour, the slave clocks follow, thus reminding viewers that the passage of time is unstoppable. The work also manages to isolate and encapsulate abstract time within the tangible form of a sculpture.

In The Between, 2006, the central work in the exhibition, is a fourteen-minute, three-screen, high-definition film shot by Almond in China and Tibet. It is the final work in Almond's train trilogy that also includes *Schwebebahn*, 1995, and *Geisterbahn*, 1999. *In The Between* was filmed on the Qinghai-Tibet railway which is the world's highest train route, reaching altitudes of up to 5,000 metres (16,400 feet). Almond contrasts images of the landscape with footage of the train as it travels from China to Tibet, and images of Tibetan Buddhist monks filmed in the Samyey monastery in Lhasa. The evident contrast between the industrial and the spiritual reveals the clash of two cultures, wherein the train symbolizes the penetrating force of China upon Tibet, both literally and metaphorically, and recalls the 1950-51 invasion of Tibet by Chinese forces.

Night + Fog, 2007, consists of six large-scale black-and-white photographs of the dead forests surrounding the nickel-mining towns of Siberia. Again, Almond highlights pollution and its damaging consequences, in this case caused by the exploitation of nickel mining and the sulphurous smoke produced by smelting metal ores.

Bearing, a single-screen projection which has its world premiere at Parasol unit, depicts the daily routines of workers in an Indonesian sulphur mine. Under severe conditions, breathing polluted air, the workers transport heavy loads of sulphur from a crater with only rags to cover their mouths from the toxic fumes.

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Darren Almond was born in 1971 in Wigan, England, and subsequently graduated from the Winchester School of Art in 1993. He has had solo exhibitions at many institutions around the world, including Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, 2007; SITE Santa Fe, 2007; Museum Folkwang, Essen, 2006; K21, Dusseldorf, 2005; Lentos Museum of Modern Art, Linz, 2005; Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Israel, 2003; Tate Britain, 2001; Kunsthalle Zurich, 2001; De Appel Centre, Amsterdam, 2001; and The Renaissance Society, Chicago, 1999. His work is held in collections worldwide, including: The Art Institute of Chicago; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The British Museum, London; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Fondation Beyeler, Basel; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Canada; Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Israel; and The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

This is Almond's most extensive exhibition held in the United Kingdom to date. It is accompanied by a two-part book entitled *Darren Almond: Index*, co-published by Parasol unit and Koenig Books. Part I catalogues the *Fire Under Snow* exhibition, while Part II provides an overview of a large number of Almond's past works.

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