



roots contemporary

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'Dead Insects in my Parents Pool'



SAM HOPKINS

March 28th to May 20th



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When I was small I would rescue drowning insects from the swimming pool. Even as a child I think I realized that this was a fairly pointless thing to do. Not only are insects not conscious (probably) but far more serious things happened concerning death and suffering in Kenya. But the choice of saving something, however small, is compelling.



Opening 28.03 at 18:00
In the presence of the artist

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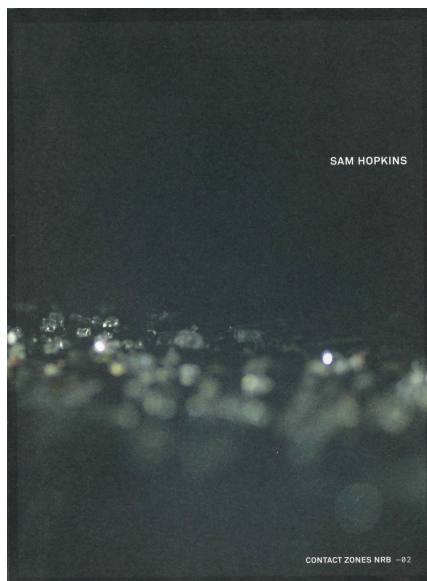
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‘Dead Insects in my Parents Pool’ by SAM HOPKINS

At first glance they seem almost like scientific specimens, removed from any obvious environment, carefully and obviously composed. However, when contextualised by the title, the idea is that they start to tell a story, to document, albeit somewhat obliquely, the context of having water in a country where many people do not. It is both tragic, but also absurd, that in Kenya many people do not have enough water to drink yet some have enough to fill swimming pools with. However, rather than tell this story through images of drought and opulence, I focussed on drowned insects in a swimming pool. The idea is to acknowledge this wealth chasm using strategies of irony and scale; the insects, but to also acknowledge my own presence within the context; the title.



About the artist



Sam Hopkins is an artist whose work responds to the specific social and political context within which he is living. In a sense his art is maybe more akin to documentary; probing, investigating and re-imagining stories, characters and elements of daily life. Rather than work with strategies of reference and allusion, he tries to make autonomous works; art which can be read without necessarily knowing a specific canon of Art. Whilst Art will always be referential in the sense that it is not produced within a cultural vacuum, these references are not the intended primary mode of meaning.

As his practice is triggered and defined by a context, the work exhibits a broad spectrum of both media and content. Although wary of grand narratives, much of his work does seem to orbit around issues of public space and the negotiation of participatory practice. Process is a critical component of the work, which is often project-based and long term. Projects such as Slum TV and Urban Mirror build and develop over many years. However, his practice also encompasses more immediate and lyrical responses to the city as seen by his work with the Usually4 collective. He has developed a body of interventions and installations, which recently have begun to focus on the peculiarities and aesthetics of the 'Development' sector which is of powerful symbolic importance in Kenya.

Born in 1979 in Rome, he was raised in Kenya and England before studying History and Spanish in Edinburgh and Cuba. He then proceeded to postgraduate studies in Contemporary Art in Oxford and Weimar, returning to Nairobi on a permanent basis in 2006. As well as working with Slum TV and Urban Mirror he is also a frequent collaborator of the Nairobi-based collective Maasai Mbili.