

## MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Exhibition:** Blake Rayne  
DOGSKULLDOGS

**Location:** 88 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002

**Dates:** September 8 – October 21, 2018

**Reception:** Saturday, September 8, 6 – 8PM

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, of *DOGSKULLDOGS*, Blake Rayne's sixth solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will be on view at our 88 Eldridge Street location.

Sixteen years after the publication of Thomas More's *Utopia*, Henry VIII had him executed. More's vision of an ideal society, rendered in woodblock by Holbein, has persisted in the imagination over centuries. The dreams of the West have lived and died on such an imprint. Today, these dreams circulate as harmonized tokens of a bygone alternative future in the cloister of archives. With Holbein's image seared into the skull, Blake Rayne exhumes the corpse of modernity at the moment of its eclipse. Seen darkly and askance, Rayne maneuvers between the metaphors of dusk and dawn, culling new tools from the decay of ideas and material production. What remains is what refuses to yield, a new *prima materia* that bears the mark of struggle and defeat while insisting on decline as a social form.

With *DOGSKULLDOGS*, Rayne unearths rust-covered artifacts of the past, finding them returned to a state of raw material, untethered from their historical instrumentalization but not without an acute memory of the histories they suggest. Viewed through the obscurity of the present, Rayne's work invites anamorphic thinking, to see objects in their own right as sheer, suspended potentiality. With an eye towards the ever-changing apparatus of museological display and commercial posturing, the works that make up *DOGSKULLDOGS* exist in interrelated combinations that refuse subordination to proper meaning or function. In a sense, they exist in a state of pre-signification, pre-cooptation, and post-utilization.

A new group of paintings depicts images sourced from widely circulated archaeological reconstructions of Neanderthal skulls. Approaching these skulls as objects of discovery, Rayne reconsiders the relationship between the modernist myth of primitivism and the persisting presumptions of 20<sup>th</sup> century art-making. "Paintings are skulls," he quite simply replies, when questioned about their subject matter. The confrontations that Rayne provokes are varied: objects that evoke both gestural and pixelated imagery among barricades that question the liminal traps of subjectivity, history, and authorship. All signs, rendered freshly inoperative, become the vital secrets of an art insistent on a poetics of non-work. Rayne cultivates the very moment that art engages thought, a singular experience within the delicate contradiction of art's untamable potency. The scenes that constitute *DOGSKULLDOGS* reiterate in shifting permutations the suspending effect of this engagement, disappropriating thought by way of artworks that seek to augment the urgent possibility of imagining a future.

*Blake Rayne lives and works in New York. In 2016, Rayne had his first survey exhibition, Cabin of the Accused (Blaffer Art Museum, Houston). In conjunction a monograph, Tense & Spaced Out, was published by Sequence and Sternberg Press, Berlin (2017). Upcoming exhibitions include the inaugural exhibition at Galerie Nuno Centeno, Porto, Portugal, and 1301PE, Los Angeles. His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, FRAC Poitou-Charentes, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Pinault Collection, among others.*