

PRESS RELEASE**Danny Fox & Kingsley Ifill*****HOLY ISLAND*****12 Feb – 26 March 2022**

Over the course of eight days in December 2021, Danny Fox and Kingsley Ifill travelled across the length of the British Isles and back again. Setting off from near Dover, Kent, and making their way up the east coast as far as the Isle of Skye, Scotland, to then return by way of the west midlands, Wales and many others locations on route. With no predetermined course, their journey was one of intuition and self-led discovery, encountering and documenting the reality of the British landscape unfurling ahead of them. Composed of a series of 50 collaborative works on paper which bring together photography by Ifill and painting by Fox, as well as large-scale multi-media paintings and sculpture, *HOLY ISLAND* is a visual travelogue of their time spent together: an exploration into the cross-section of rural and urban fabric that makes up Britain today.

Central to the exhibition is the juxtaposition of scenery and medium. Described by the artists as a proximity of “brick and bush” that is emblematic of the British landscape, each of the works on display flutter between images of urban and civic architecture—social housing, bridges, football pitches and shop fronts—to serene depictions of the seaside, rural treescapes and expansive, exposed cliff faces. Switching between their respective subjects, these parallel—and at times conflicting—visions of Britain are manifest through a shifting emotional realism of mixed-media, black and white photography and quickly executed, glossy enamel paintings—a technique developed by Fox through the mixing and application of nail varnish, used as a substitute for acrylic paint once on the road, purchased from local pharmacies and corner shops along the way.

At times annotated with their location, at others descriptive lyrical notes, or else simply left anonymous and open to interpretation, these landscapes remain nevertheless enigmatic in their shared evocation of a land that holds in constant tension ideals of a deep, ancestral past with the recent scars of its post-industrial decay. Colouring the exhibition with subtle undertones of gothic and romantic sensibility, these contrasting signals are felt not only in its images but in the materiality of the mixed-media works, which combine traditional oil paint with acrylic screen-printing, tarpaulin, cotton and leather. Evocative of both rural leisure activities and the painful, overlooked reality of rough sleeping, these works, together with those on paper, produce an ambient unease suggestive of the unconformable proximity between warm British idealism and its cold hard-edged reality.

Centred and held together by the exhibition’s titular sculpture, a stained-red hide of leather is splayed forebodingly across the gallery floor, accompanied by an empty wooden bird cage. Pairing the formal language of Fox’s painting—with striking flat areas of colour and bold outlines—to that of Ifill’s compositional austerity and darker psychological mood, the sculpture resonates with the form of an isolated island, further sharpening associations that can be drawn between the vitality of the landscapes displayed and notions of identity, sacrifice, migration and

belonging. Having spent an extended period of their recent lives living in different countries, the symbolism of the cage is partnered with a stark wooden shed—a lonesome and sombre dwelling that compels our perspective inward, signalling an unanswered and ongoing conflict within each of us: between our sense of self, the place in which we live and how far we are willing to go or travel to find home.

The third in a series of collaborative projects by the artists, *HOLY ISLAND* reflects on the British landscape with honesty and sincerity, a characteristic style of their shared work, imbued with subtle inferences of the surrounding socio-political worlds that inform their respective lives and time spent working together. Focused on representing the world as it is seen and experienced in the immediate moment, the combined intensity of feeling that is presented in this exhibition ultimately explores the contrasting ways in which two artists interpret the same set of questions, the points of connection and difference between the two, and how through this exchange one might find a common ground or deeper sense of truth through the shared intuition, challenges and sense of artistic pursuit this gives rise to.

Danny Fox (b. 1986, Cornwall, UK) lives and works in Cornwall. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Brown Willy*, Saatchi Yates, London, UK (2021); *The Sweet and Burning Hills*, Alexander Berggruen, New York, US (2021); *Some Mornings Catch a Wraith*, Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, US (2019); *Doped, Roped and Horoscoped*, Eighteen Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (2019); *Blood Spots On Apple Flesh*, Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery, Luxembourg, LU (2018); *Mitre Delta*, Bill Brady Gallery, Miami, US (2017); *A Spoon With The Bread Knife*, V1 Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (2016); and *As He Bowed His Head To Drink*, The Redfern Gallery, London, UK (2015). In 2017 Fox completed the Porthmeor Artist Residency Programme, St. Ives, UK. His work is in the public collections of Denver Art Museum and Start Museum, Shanghai.

Kingsley Ifill (b. 1988, Kent, UK) lives and works in Kent. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Soul Swallow*, V1 Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (2019); *Bouquet*, LNCC, London, UK (2018); *Last Sip First*, pleasewait. Gallery, Paris, FR (2018); *Mute*, Golborne Gallery, London, UK (2017); and *Stutter*, Cob Gallery, London, UK (2016). Since 2009 Ifill's photography has been the subject of over 20 solo publications.

HOLY ISLAND is the third collaborative project by Danny Fox & Kingsley Ifill. The exhibition follows from their recent exhibition and publication, *Eye For a Styer, Tooth For the Roof*, at Eighteen Gallery, Copenhagen (2021), a project which sought to extend the conversation between the mediums of drawing and photography that has been taking place since the late 19th century; and *HAZE* (2020), a publication of photographs taken whilst the artists were isolating at Eastern Hill in Cornwall during the 2020 global Coronavirus pandemic. A third publication produced by the artists will be released to coincide with the exhibition, featuring a foreword by Hector Campbell, as well as exhibition text and interview by Charlie Mills.