



PRESS RELEASE: March 2019

Rhodes Contemporary Art presents

Nick Smith: *Pinched*

Dates: 3 May – 1 June, 2019

Private view: 2 May, 2019

Contemporary artist Nick Smith will open an exhibition of new works at Rhodes Contemporary Art (formerly the Lawrence Alkin Gallery) on 3 May 2019, following four sell-out shows at the gallery.



Smith working on 'Storm on the Sea of Galilee', Rembrandt © Nick Smith



Known for his signature 'colour-chip' methodology and deconstruction and reworking of visual culture, this latest body of work *Pinched*, will explore themes of art theft, a crime only exceeded in value by arms dealing, drug trafficking and money laundering.

Smith often uses satire threads in economics, society and pop culture to curate his exhibitions, as previously seen in *Priceless*, in which he looked at the precariousness of the art market. *Pinched* is a continuum of this body of work - his research on art markets leading him to the more abstract area of art theft. Smith is interested in what happens to ideas of value once an artwork has been stolen, as it is almost impossible for this to translate into monetary value.

The theft of the Mona Lisa in the early 1900s from the Louvre is commonly regarded as the first great art heist of the 20th century. This incident saw the dramatic elevation of the artwork in the popular consciousness, creating the phenomena that surrounds it today. Since then there has been a wealth of stories behind such heists as thousands of works of major and minor art have been stolen from museums, galleries and private collections. *Pinched* examines these often surprising, always colourful heists and explores the absence of these works within art history and cultural identity.

The exhibition consists of 20 new works by the artist, with reworkings of infamous, instantly recognisable stolen artworks to some lesser known works by the heavy hitters of art history; including Vermeer's *The Concert* (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) and Munch's *The Scream* (Munch Museum). Extensive research went into the series, drawing on information collected from media archives, crime reports,



CCTV, police statements and the most wanted list of the twentieth century's biggest art heists.

Using his trademark colour chips, the artist has created specter-like chromatic blurs of images that have remained potent forces despite no longer being available for public consumption. In addition to his unique visual language of colour swatches,

Smith presents a confident and playful collection of mixed medium artworks and screen prints highlighting the absurdity and intrigue left in the wake of these heists. The exhibition looks at the void left by these stolen works and how this manifests within public consciousness and cultural history, the material existence of these artworks was only one, and not strictly the crucial, element of meaning.

Artist Nick Smith says: *"Each piece lost represents a partial loss of our heritage and art history. My fascination is not with the images themselves, but the stories behind the thefts. What is the motivation? And how does the theft influence the artwork's place in our current cultural landscape?"*

Colour methodology remains a significant part of Smith's oeuvre, using graded colour chips (he makes himself), this pixel like quality creates a three-tier experience for the viewer. The first tier is felt through digital format, via the periphery of a phone or screen, the viewer is then able to discover the narrative that relates to the image when physically viewing the artwork. Finally, there is a voyeuristic view of the palette of colours that are used in an image.

With a multi-disciplinary background, Smith's work marries digital design with fine art, exploring the relationship between audience, image and text. He has exhibited widely in both solo and group exhibitions, nationally and internationally.



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Notes to editor

About Nick Smith:

Nick Smith is a contemporary British Artist with a unique visual language. Smith Graduated from Coventry University with a First Class Masters Degree in Product Design, facilitating his successful career in commercial interior design for 10 years, where his medium of custom colour swatches evolved. Seeking further creative fulfilment, Smith dedicated himself full time to his art. With 5 sellout solo shows, 16 group shows and over 25 published print editions, Smith occupies a unique space in the contemporary art world.

After deconstructing an image, Smith undertakes extensive research to annotate each colour swatch with a word. Evolving from word/colour association, Smith often includes a linear narrative to subvert or support the context of each image, creating an additional layer of information in his work. It is this contextual interplay that engages the viewer with Smith's thought provoking work, encouraging further contemplation.

[Website](#)

[Instagram](#)



About Rhodes Contemporary Art:

Rhodes Contemporary Art is an independent commercial art gallery located in the heart of London. Operating from our split-level boutique space that was until recently Lawrence Alkin Gallery and prior to that, originally the TomTom Gallery.

Their primary goal is to develop the next generation of artists through exciting and engaging exhibitions, events and exclusive publications from a breadth of talent.

The gallery's core principal of offering affordable original artworks and limited editions is combined with the belief that the work on display must have a strong visual impact and high quality production.

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