

Lyles & King



Phillip Birch
Milespires & Reliquaries
October 13 - November 12

106 Forsyth Street, New York, NY, 10002, www.lylesandking.com

Lyles & King is pleased to present *Milespires and Reliquaries*, a new movie and accompanying sculptural installation by American artist Phillip Birch. The exhibition, Birch's second with Lyles & King, begins a new project of world building. Birch's movie combines 3D and 2D animation, and is set in a futuristic dark age that he suggests is a projection of mankind's current trajectory and a parallel to the dark age of the last millennium.

Looking both forward and backward, Phillip Birch's work proposes both alternative histories explained by science fiction and historically informed sci-fi futures. In recent work, Birch has created objects and persons that could plausibly inhabit the world depicted in *Milespires and Reliquaries*, but the movie shown here provides the foundational narrative and lays the framework for Birch to further elaborate this world.

Milespires tells the story of Eikon, who spawns in a world one thousand years from our present time and learns the history of the last millennium from a supercomputer named EVE. Like the dark age following the collapse of the Roman Empire, when belief in the Christian god reversed man's progress through reason, the world Eikon enters is in the aftermath of a rejection of reason, with anti-science ideology having replaced Christianity as the primary religion. The fallout began when those alienated from the liberating promise of technology turned towards a group of ideological strongmen, who in turn rallied a coalition of "Reapers" to destroy information with a religious fervor. As part of the effort towards world stability, EVE explains that all bio forms are now programmed with a purpose, but Eikon is one of the occasional humans who spawn without purpose and with free will. As Eikon learns how alienation bred ideology and how zeal destroyed reason, and questions the relationship of science to power, this free human must decide whether the life EVE describes is worth living.

Among other objects, Birch's sculpture for the exhibition comprises three relics created by the Martyrs of Reason, who recorded essential information upon their DNA when the Reapers waged war on rationality. These relics – a hand, a food, and a head – are made by ensconcing LCD screens in 3D printed body parts, which Birch sands and paints with metallic color after their fabrication. The reliquaries, containing the martyrs' preserved data in video form, continue Birch's interest in body horror and our formerly Christian, now technologically-based fascination with corporeal transcendence. Incorporating historical knowledge of the relationship between religion and science into a vision of the future, Birch's interdisciplinary exhibition presents a story of events recognizable enough to either seem inevitable or compel us to change.

Milespires and Reliquaries, 2017

3D and 2D animation, approximately 30 minutes

Featuring Jennifer Keister (EVE), TD Sidell (1A), and Phillip Birch (Eikon)

Screenplay edited by Colin J. Montgomery

Musical score by Jonathan Campolo and Jonathan Schenke, with assistance from Robert Aceto

Phillip Birch received his BFA from the College for Creative Studies, Detroit, and lives in New York. Solo exhibitions and performances include *Master Dynamic: Frontier*, Lyles & King, New York; *The Hand of God*, Essex Flowers, New York; *The Crown of Modernity (An Intervention in the Napoleonic Age)*, 47 Canal, New York; and *Wonder is Coming (Actor or Agent)*, Cave Gallery, Detroit, among others. Group exhibitions include SculptureCenter, New York; BWA Warszawa, Warsaw; Futura, Prague; Gallery Four, Baltimore; 247365, New York; Regina Rex, Brooklyn; and BAM, Brooklyn, among others.