

T O T A H

TR ERICSSON

Letters from Home

September 7th – November 4th, 2023

TOTAH presents *Letters from Home*, an exhibition of recent works by TR Ericsson. *Letters from Home* will open September 7th, and run through November 4th, 2023. This is Ericsson's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

TR Ericsson's *Letters from Home* is at once archival, vestigial, and documentarian. Actual letters from Ericsson's mother (who died by suicide in 2003) permeate the objects and situations he recreates across various media—ranging from oil paintings and screen prints, to pieces of powdered bone melted into raw linen and one nearly 1,000 pound granite sculpture.

While Ericsson's photo-based recreations of family, friends, their heirlooms, their carefully arranged domestic interiors, are known for arriving at universal truths through the artist's deeply personal relationship with his mother, *Letters from Home* invokes a particular sense of a place as much as history. In works like *Day is Done*, and *The Fireplace*, viewers pick up on some greater architectural precedent in relation to which an assortment of books on a bookshelf, or a fireplace studded with keepsakes, souvenirs, and mementos, comes to life as the expression of an actual dwelling place.

More textual pieces like "WELL, THE WEEK REALLY STARTED WITH A BANG!" (September 17, 1991), or the granite floorpiece *Thanksgiving Day*, reconfigure, at different scales, written correspondences from Ericsson's mother. "WELL, THE WEEK REALLY STARTED WITH A BANG!" (September 17, 1991), not only memorializes a particular day, its series of events, but the handwritten lettering captured in the work branches out into a complex psychological narrative, the nervous rhythm of remembered events, apparent not only in what the words say but how they're shaped, their physiognomy. Similarly, *Thanksgiving Day* solidifies the drama of familial conflicts; the downward-oriented positioning of the work serves to showcase how readily we can sidestep momentous experiences, simply because they seem more personal than historical.

Throughout *Letters from Home*, Ericsson is interested in a single person—his mother. He painstakingly recreates her letters, like gestural ciphers to her psyche, not so much out of loyalty, as out of love. Translating the particulars of his mother's life into a universal sigil of complex social relationships—blurring the line between artifact and art, memory and the radiating expanse of history as it extends into an originary abyss—an ever-displaced sense of context reaches past the scrim of quotidian appearance towards a sheer involvement with the entropic nature of time. Ericsson's exhumations bring to light an essential insight as articulated by the poet Li-Young Lee: "If love doesn't prevail, who wants to live in this world?"

TR Ericsson (born Cleveland, 1972) uses the story of his mother to present a searing, soft, and complex portrait of post-industrial life in America. Ericsson constructs his work using traditional art materials such as canvas, bronze, photography, and clay as well as video, found objects, and artifacts taken from his family archives. Ericsson's work has appeared in solo and group exhibitions in the United States and abroad including those with The Cleveland Museum of Art, OH; The Dallas Museum of Art, TX; SCAD Museum of Art, GA; and the Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp, Switzerland. In 2022 he was a finalist for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery's Outwin Boochever American Portrait prize. Ericsson's work is in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Yale University Library (Special Collections) and the Progressive Art Collection as well numerous private collections. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

For further information please contact info@davidtotah.com