



Nathaniel Rackowe, *Black Shed Expanded*, 2014/2016. Timber shed, fluorescent lights and fittings, bitumen, paint, steel, 240 x 220 x 220 cm (94½ x 86¼ x 86¼ in). Edition 2 of 2 (2016). Courtesy of the artist.

Parasolstice – Winter Light 2016

Nathaniel Rackowe: *Black Shed Expanded*

27 October 2016 – 12 March 2017

(Preview: Wednesday 26 October, 6–8 pm)

Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is delighted to present *Black Shed Expanded*, 2014/2016, an extraordinary light sculpture by London-based artist **Nathaniel Rackowe**. This work is the 2016 addition to the **Parasolstice – Winter Light** series, for which Parasol unit invites a contemporary artist to exhibit a work that addresses the phenomenon of light.

Displayed on the foundation's terrace throughout the months of winter, Nathaniel Rackowe's large-scale urban shed structure is installed, seemingly mid-explosion, upside-down, its contours wrenched apart, exposing its illuminated interior. The wooden shed, painted with black bitumen, emanates an eerie acid-yellow glow from the white strip-lighting inside it reflecting off the painted walls of its interior. The structure appears to be exploding, as if it is being split apart by the force of the light within it. Rackowe says, 'I thought it would be interesting to take the humble shed and elevate it so it can rise up and challenge architecture and also deconstruct it to the point where you are forced to re-read it.' Although a direct reference to the ubiquity of garden sheds throughout the suburbs of London, the work has an equally universal impact in its depiction of such a familiar, domestic structure.

Rackowe often combines elements of light and movement, the crucial components of his practice. Essentially inspired by the urban environment, the primary impetus behind his works is the growth and shifting nature of a city. He uses recognisable urban infrastructure and industrial products, such as scaffolding poles or breeze blocks, and in this instance a garden shed. After deconstructing the idea of a structure he rebuilds it tangibly with the added element of light. The intention is to recreate the experience of being in and moving through an urban environment with particular emphasis on in-between spaces, where light fluctuates from negative to positive. Each material he selects 'carries specific associations', which are reiterated through his distortion of their intended function.

Inspired by constructivist and deconstructivist artists such as Vladimir Tatlin, Richard Serra, and Gordon Matta-Clark, Rackowe's works also pay particular homage to the artists Donald Judd and Dan Flavin. Similarly, Rackowe uses mass-produced industrial materials together with the element of light to create contemporary monuments that enliven our urban reality.

Note to Editors

Artist Biography

Nathaniel Rackowe, born 1975 in Cambridge, currently lives and works in London. He studied at Sheffield Hallam University, achieving a BA Hons Fine Art (Sculpture) in 1998. In 2001, he earned an MFA Sculpture from The Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, having gained an Arts and Humanities Research Board Award for postgraduate study. He was awarded a Boise Travel Scholarship in 2003 and had his first solo show in 2004 at the GardenFresh Gallery, Chicago, USA. In that same year he also received the Stanhope Fellowship, which led to his *Stanhope Solo Exhibition* in the Serpentine Pavilion, London, in 2005. In that same year he showed *Shift* at Bischoff/Weiss, London, where he went on to present three further solo shows. Since then he has participated widely in group and solo exhibitions around the world, including in Bangkok, China, Colombia, Europe, Korea, Thailand, the USA, and most recently in Dubai, where his solo exhibition *Radiant Trajectory* was shown at Lawrie Shabibi in 2015. His work is in a number of private and public collections, including the UK Government Art Collection; MONA|Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania, Australia; Museum of Modern Art, Lima, Peru; Jumex Collection, Mexico; and CIFO|Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, USA. Rackowe has also had artist residencies in Hull (2005) and the Forest of Dean (2006) in the UK; in Bangkok (2006); Beirut, Lebanon (2009); and Copenhagen, Denmark (2012).

Rackowe has undertaken a number of public sculpture projects, including *RP3* at the Economist Plaza in London (2007); *Spin* in Lima, Peru (2010) and *Black Shed Expanded* at the Village Royal, Paris (2014). He participated in *Lumiere*, the annual Light Festival in Durham (2013), and in House of the Nobleman's *Light Fantastic* in London (2014). In January 2016, he participated in *Lumiere London*.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Founded in December 2004, Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is a registered educational charity and a not-for-profit institution that operates purely for the public benefit. Every year the foundation organises four challenging and thought-provoking exhibitions of works by international contemporary artists working in various media and arranges other artistic projects. The foundation also engages with the public and its neighbouring community through a full programme of educational events. In its genuine mission to serve the public, the foundation does not bear the name of its founder, and its exhibitions do not derive from any particular private collection. Admission to all exhibitions at Parasol unit is free of charge. Thanks to its innovative model between private funding and public support, one of London's most vibrant contemporary art spaces has come to exist and thrive.

Free Admission

Parasol unit
14 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW

Opening hours:

Monday by prior arrangement
Tuesday–Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm
Sunday, 12 – 5 pm

Directions: Tube to Old Street or Angel
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