

For Immediate Release: 17 July 2019

TITLE:

A Foul and Awesome Display

ARTIST NAME:

Kirsty Harris

DATES: 31 August – 28 September 2019

“I’m interested in the decisive moment, a meditation on a split second. That split second iconically represents our race to self-destruction. The beauty and awe of the landscape, the dust, the glow, the force of the explosion. The myths surrounding the characters in this master-plan to kill ourselves off. The fight for survival. We’ve shown ourselves THE END.”

Harris’s paintings depicting nuclear bomb tests are vast and confrontational, depicting moments of manufactured violence that radically disrupt the landscape. In *Charlie* (2017) each square inch of linen represents 4 tons of TNT – which in turn is the unit of measurement that denotes the yield of the explosion.

A 1950s rotary telephone rings intermittently and when answered plays the audio piece *Cold Call (How I Learned to Stop Worrying 1945-2019)* (2019). The composition is a musical account of every officially recorded nuclear explosion. Each different instrument represents a country that partook. Each month in history lasts a second in time. Each note played depicts a single detonation. The piece passes through periods of relative calm building up through chaotic peaks of activity and back down again.

The projections are unavoidable, relentlessly looping they fill the room with moments from China’s PLA films. In *The Victim* (2016) a Yak-11 aircraft (potentially gifted to China by the USSR during a time of collaboration) twists and turns like a trapped animal – in the desolate landscape of the Lop Nur Desert. While ‘smiley faced’ equipment jolts up and down alongside a caged monkey, creating the feeling that the room itself is shaking.

The Apple (2016-19) is an instructional artwork, illuminated by a bare bulb from above, it commands you to eat the apple and take a printout from the stack. *The Apple* references the ‘Father of the Atomic Bomb’, JR Oppenheimer’s attempt to poison his lab tutor at Cambridge University.

In conjunction with the painting *Charlie*, in the publication entitled *Completely er, unfolding itself* (2019) Harris has transcribed the first official television broadcast of an atomic explosion – given the code name ‘Charlie’ – in 1942. The reporters struggle and grasp for the language to describe the mushroom cloud in front of them.

How I Learned to Stop Worrying (1945-2019) (2019) is available to buy as a 12inch vinyl picture disc during the exhibition and 500 risograph prints have been made for the public to take.

Exhibition preview: Friday 30 August 5-8pm

ENDS

Kirsty Harris: Biography

Kirsty Harris was born in 1978 in Nottinghamshire and raised in Yorkshire. She lives and works in London. She graduated from the Sir John Cass School of Art, London in 2002. Solo exhibitions

include 'How I Learned to Stop Worrying', CFCCA, Manchester (2016). Group shows include 'Field Study', The Auxiliary Warehouse, Middlesbrough (2019), 'Strange Love', Bankley Studios and Gallery, Levenshulme, 'SOLO Award 2018', Chiara Williams Contemporary, London (2018), 'Phantom', Ruskin Gallery, Cambridge, 'Paradise Lost', Plymouth Art Weekender (2017), 'Liberate yourself from my vice-like grip', Islington Mill, Manchester (2016). Harris had an artist's residency at Vane, Newcastle upon Tyne in 2015. She co-founded Come Quick Disaster, a platform for art, with Henrietta Armstrong. She is co-curator of 'WIMMIN II' coming up in October 2019 as part of Art Licks Weekend. Her work is held in private and public collections internationally including The National Atomic Testing Museum, Nevada, USA.

Contact details

For further information or images please contact:

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Vane is open Wednesday-Saturday, 12-5pm, admission free.

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Vane

Vane was founded in 1997 in Newcastle upon Tyne in the North East of England. Vane opened a permanent gallery space in Newcastle city centre in 2005. In October 2011 Vane launched a gallery space on the first floor of Commercial Union House, 39 Pilgrim Street in the centre of Newcastle.

Vane represents the work of a number of artists, both from across the UK and internationally, as well as showing the work of invited artists in collaboration with other galleries. The gallery directors are Paul Stone and Christopher Yeats. Vane is supported by Arts Council England.

High resolution files available on request.



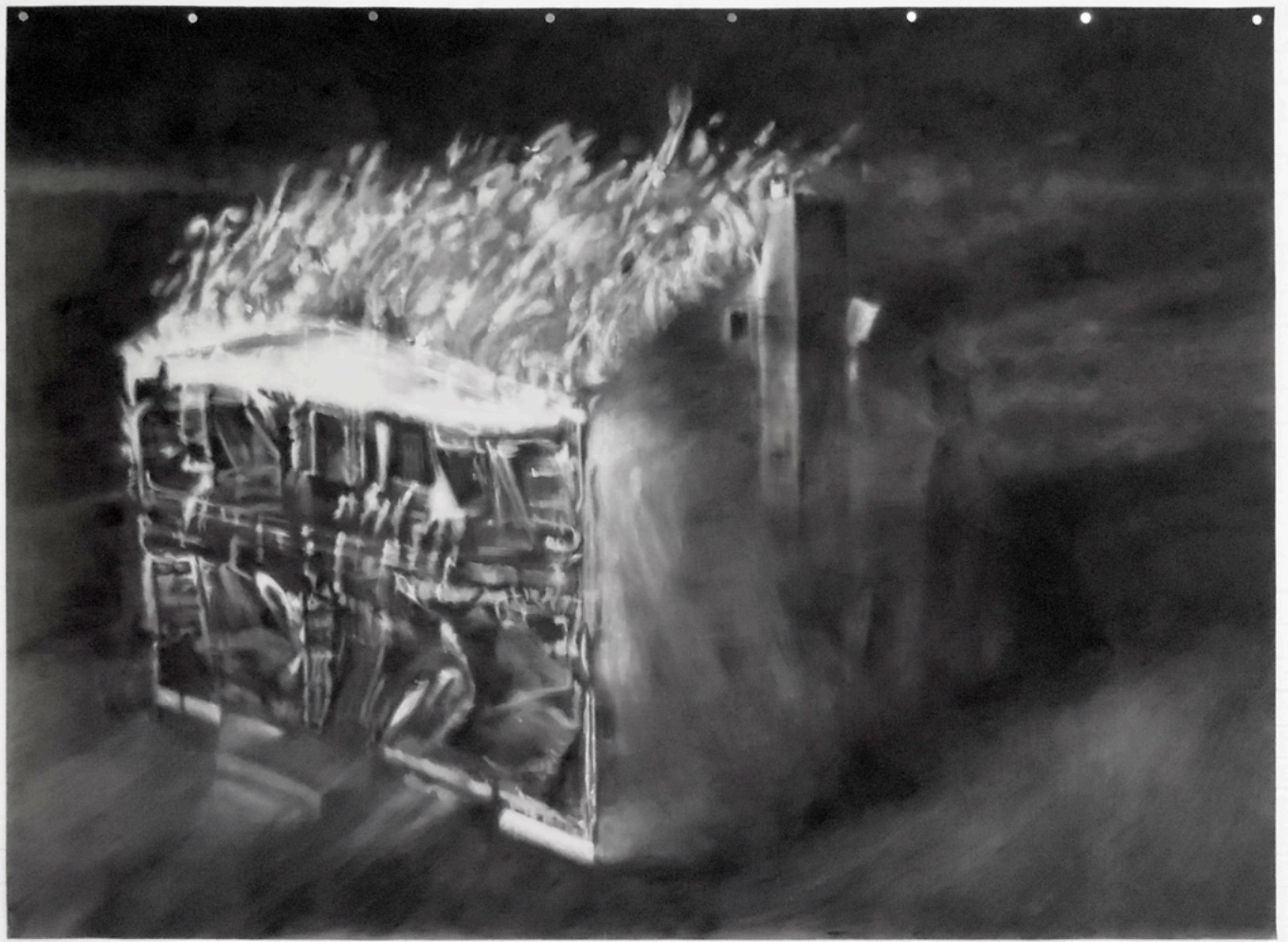
Kirsty Harris in her studio, 2019. Photo: courtesy of the artist.



Kirsty Harris, Charlie, 2017, oil on unstretched linen, 69x112ins. Photo: courtesy of the artist.



Kirsty Harris, Ranger Able, 2019, oil on unstretched linen, 80x63ins. Photo: courtesy of the artist.



Kirsty Harris, *Sanctuary II*, 2018, oil on unstretched linen, 217x305cm. Photo: courtesy of the artist and SET Project space.



Kirsty Harris, (foreground) *The Apple*, 2016-19, mixed media, dimensions variable, (background) *IT WORKED*, 2016, vinyl, dimensions variable. Photo: courtesy of the artist and Middlesbrough Art Weekender.