



JORGE OTERO-PAILOS
American Fence

17.09 – 31.10.2021
30 Cork Street, London W1S 3NG

You can't destroy history. The history and this fence is precisely what is left after we're done trying to destroy it. I think it's important to remove this fence but also to find a way to keep it. Preserving the act of taking it down. -- Jorge Otero-Pailos

Holtermann Fine Art is pleased to present *American Fence*, a series of new sculptures by artist and preservationist Jorge Otero-Pailos, and his first solo show with the gallery. The Cork Street exhibition will feature eight works from the group of steel sculptures made from the remains of the security fence that surrounded the U.S. Embassy in Norway following the events of September 11th, 2001. Concurrently, Otero-Pailos' *American Fence: Biosignature Preservation* will be on view in the heart of London for the 2021 edition of Frieze Sculpture, set to take place from September 14th through October 31st. The free public exhibition will be open at the same time as Frieze London and Frieze Masters and is curated by Clare Lilley, director of programming at Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

The U.S. Embassy in Oslo, designed by Eero Saarinen in 1959, was recently listed as a National Norwegian Monument and sold to a private owner. The listing carefully excluded the 9/11 fence as unsightly, preserving only an idealized image of the mid-century building. The fence, however, represents an important chapter in history. Set for removal in 2019, Otero-Pailos organized a public performance where demolition machines crushed the fence in situ, in turn creating a group of large outdoor sculptures and a series of works on a more intimate scale. He named the sculptures using extracts from official treaties signed between Norway and the U.S. in the years 2001 - 2019.

Otero-Pailos draws from his formal training in architecture and preservation to create artworks that address themes of memory, history and transition, inviting the viewer to consider monuments as powerful agents for cultural connection, questioning and understanding. He employs material residues of buildings and sites - including airborne atmospheric dust, waterways, traces of sweat, body sounds, maps and this embassy security fence to render their invisible meanings visible. A prominent work by the artist was the site-specific Artangel project *The Ethics of Dust: Westminster Hall* in 2016. Applying absorbent latex to the length of one 50-meter long wall, the artist was able to pull away what became a shimmering sheet of history – evocative of time, events, fates and victories whose invisible imprints were given form in the remnants attached to the sheet.

In this exhibition, the themes of memory and transition are manifested in a different way. While both hauntingly aggressive and emollently rounded, the sculptures speak directly of international relations while embodying memory, monument and history. Otero-Pailos seeks to preserve the fence and the taking it down. Influenced by Donald Winnicott, the artist says: “Like children need to carry things from home into the outside world, as adults we need to carry objects from the past into the future”. The exhibition enables a poignant dialogue with and across time, provoking new understandings about – and a deeper sense of accountability for – our shared existence.

About the artist

Jorge Otero-Pailos (1971, Spain) is a New York-based artist and preservationist best known for making monumental casts of historically charged buildings. Notably, he has used experimental preservation cleaning techniques designed to restore landmarked buildings, as well as reenactment methodologies, as part of his creative process. His site-specific series, *The Ethics of Dust*, is an ongoing, decade-long investigation resulting from cleaning dust and the residue of pollution from monuments such as the Doge’s Palace in Venice; Westminster Hall in the Houses of Parliament, London; the U.S. Old Mint in San Francisco; and Trajan’s Column at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. His latest projects include preserving airborne dust in the atmosphere (*Far Above*, Cornell University, Ithaca), saving the perimeter security fence of the ex U.S. Embassy in Oslo by turning it into sculptures (*American Fence*, Oslo, Norway) and immersing visitors’ bodies in a soundscape composed with New York State’s main water bodies at Lyndhurst Estate’s historical pool building (*Watershed Moment*, Tarrytown, NY). Collections include Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; SFMoMA, San Francisco; The Museum of London; The Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland; The Whitworth, Manchester; The Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea; Kelvingrove/The People’s Palace, Glasgow; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; Museion: Contemporary Art Museum of Bolzano, Italy. Exhibitions include: *Watershed Moment*, Lyndhurst Mansion (2020/2021); *Far Above*, Cornell University’s School of Architecture (2019); *Répétiteur*, New York City Center, New York (2018/2019); Chicago Architecture Biennial (2017/2018); *The Ethics of Dust: Westminster Hall*, Artangel, London (2016); *Space-Time*, Keller Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of

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Technology (2014); *Making Worlds*, Venice Art Biennial, Italy (2009); *An Olfactory Reconstruction of Philip Johnson's Glass House*, New Canaan, CT (2008). Otero-Pailos is the Roy Lichtenstein Artist in Residence of the American Academy in Rome for the 2021-22 academic year.

About Holtermann Fine Art

Holtermann Fine Art has been dealing internationally in 20th century and contemporary art since the early 1980s. Holtermann has produced and sold important site-specific and permanent sculptures by Claes Oldenburg, Tony Oursler and Tony Cragg to public and private collections. Holtermann has instigated and organized large scale travelling exhibitions of work by Tony Cragg in the US, China and Taiwan as well as a large show with Michael Craig-Martin in China. These exhibitions have been at major state and private museums, including the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; CAFAM, Beijing and the Hubei National Museum, Wuhan, with accompanying catalogues.

Holtermann Fine Art has been instrumental in the formation of several important private museum collections and has successfully negotiated sales to public and private institutions of works by artists including Georg Baselitz, Tony Cragg, Robert Gober, Anselm Kiefer, Edvard Munch, Claes Oldenburg and Charles Ray. Museums that have acquired work through Holtermann include the Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo, Hubei National Museum, Wuhan, the Kistefos Museum, Norway, and M+, Hong Kong.

Holtermann opened its first public space on Cork Street in Mayfair in 2019. Shows at the gallery expands Holtermann's core activity of showing and placing important sculptural works in urban and natural settings through curated shows setting individual works in historical and cultural contexts thereby contributing to the dialogue on an artist's oeuvre, relationships and position. Recent shows have included works by Georg Baselitz, Antony Gormley, Sterling Ruby and Woodrow/Deacon as well as younger artists like Tony Matelli, Charlie Roberts and Borden Capalino.

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30 Cork Street - London W1S 3NG

Tuesday to Friday 11:00-18:00 / Saturday 11:00-17:00

FRIEZE SCULPTURE 2021

Regent's Park, London

14.09 – 31.10.2021

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