

Brent Green: A Brief Spark Bookended by Darkness

March 28 – April 28, 2018

Andrew Edlin Gallery is pleased to present *A Brief Spark Bookended by Darkness*, a solo exhibition for Brent Green, his third with the gallery. In addition to violin dresses, an elaborate hammer piano and two animated films, *A Brief Spark* also includes a handful of paintings and drawings. The films and musical sculptures have been linked via a computer program. The film *Outswimming Battleships*, is accompanied by a score played on four of his violin dresses, and when this film ends, *A Brief Spark* begins. Green has been significantly influenced by contemporary Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki and the drones emitted by the artist's hand-made instruments evoke the frightening unease of "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima," which is widely considered Penderecki's best-known work.

Outswimming Battleships is a stop motion animation of chunky cardboard cut-outs of the silhouettes of outdated battle ships, and circular saw-like blades of waves, which ferociously pursue a line animation of a somewhat emaciated, middle-aged male swimmer. *A Brief Spark*, is instead characterized by Green's spindly drawing style and musical score accompanying it which include spoken lyrics in the artist's quivering voice. The story he recounts is caught up in despair and apprehension – as he seeks comfort by losing himself in his love of another. The world that Green presents is so intimate as to verge on the claustrophobic, a startling carnival set-up in a cramped bedroom. Though made to appear damaged and from another era, everything about *A Brief Spark* is calculated, considered and timed to affect. All of this poignantly represents Green's themes of deep and desperate love, in a world that is endlessly on the verge of calamity. Given that the two films are linked, one might make the conceptual leap that *I Dreamt of Out Swimming Battles Ships* (which is the film's name on the title card) is *A Brief Sparks'* dream sequence.

The mysteriously arcane, at times unnervingly sappy, hilarious and haunting nature of Green's work reflects the damage that desperation, anxiety, and despair inflict on the psyche. He combines a Mark Twain-like literary sensibility with a sensitivity to his various media, which range from filmmaking, handmade animation, performance and music, to the construction of elaborate, rustically baroque assemblages. Essentially, his scraps of folk wisdom and humor, sentimentality, DIY aesthetic and fantasy portray our internalized struggle with the onslaught of negativity and despondency. His emotional honesty about fear and love is part of the larger conversation about how we are to live in this world together. By giving expression to the vastness of our need, how strange and embarrassingly dependent we are on one another, the surreal worlds Green invents — haunted as they are by a desire for catharsis, as well as a fascination with the uncanny — are just peculiar enough to provoke real critical self-reflection.

Brent Green (b. 1978) is an American self-taught, animated filmmaker living and working in rural upstate New York. A 2005 Creative Capital grantee, Green's sculptures, films, live performances and drawings have been exhibited in venues ranging from city rooftops to the

Museum of Modern Art (New York), The Kitchen (New York), The Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), The Berkeley Art Museum, The Walker Art Center (Minneapolis) and the Sundance Film Festival (Park City, UT). His art is in the permanent collections of public institutions including The Museum of Modern Art (New York), the American Folk Art Museum (New York) and The Hammer Museum (Los Angeles).