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# Spike Island

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**Benoît Maire**

*Thebes*

6 October to 9 December 2018

Preview: Friday 5 October, 6–9pm



Benoît Maire can be described as a visual philosopher, taking inspiration from a range of disciplines including geometry, sociology and mythology. His major solo exhibition *Thebes* at Spike Island features more than ninety works ranging from paintings and sculptures to furniture, everyday objects and films.

*Thebes* continues Maire's exploration of François Lyotard's concept of the 'differend' – a notion based on the insurmountable conflict between saying and seeing. In the exhibition space, Maire sees the potential for meaning to exist without language; where the image can take the place of the word. His *Cloud Paintings* (a series he began in 2012), draw a parallel between painting and the ever changing forms of clouds, passing through figuration and abstraction and allowing for leaps of the imagination.

A recurring theme in this exhibition is the question of the origin of humankind and the objects we produce. The exhibition owes its title, *Thebes*, to the Greek city renowned in mythology for its Sphinx, whose riddles held the inhabitants of the city hostage. Benoît Maire's exhibition is a puzzle in which the enigmatic quality of the objects—whether manufactured by the artist himself or by others—see their uncertain origin matched by their disconcerting juxtaposition.

With additional works by Pierre Dariel, Jean Derval, Lito S. Freeman, French artist (anonymous), Greek artist (anonymous), Josef Hoffmann, Jacques Innocenti, Alberto Korda, Robert Mallet-Stevens.

*Thebes* was originally commissioned by CAPC musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux.

Image credit: Benoît Maire *Origin of numbers* (2017) Courtesy the artist

– Ends –

For further information and high resolution images please contact Jane Faram, Communications Manager on 0117 929 2266 or [jane.faram@spikeisland.org.uk](mailto:jane.faram@spikeisland.org.uk)

#### Notes for editors:

- Born in 1978, Pessac, France, Benoît Maire graduated from Villa Arson, Nice and Panthéon-Sorbonne University – Paris 1. He produces exhibitions, publications, film projections and performances and collaborates with artists, philosophers and musicians.

Benoît Maire's artist's book *Aesthetics of Differends* (2008 -) documents his ongoing research on the 'differend' – a concept borrowed from philosopher Jean-François Lyotard. Neither philosophy nor art, the *Aesthetics of Differends* seeks to corrupt classical formats by the experimental use of theory.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Thebes*, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux; *Un cheval, des silex*, galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris (both 2018); *Disaster*, Croy Nielsen, Vienna; *Cloud Paintings*, Arsenal, New York (both 2017); *George Slays the Dragon*, Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld (2016).

Recent group exhibitions include Baltic Triennial: *Give Up the Ghost*, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania; *KEDEM-KODEM-KADIMA*, The Center for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv, Israël; *Archipelago – A Problem (On Exactitude in Science)*, Tlön Projects, Toussaintkade 49, The Hague, Netherlands (all 2018); *Homestead*, Carl Louie, Ontario (2017).

- Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design. It is a place where artists and the public can meet, enabling audiences to engage with artists' research and production. Within the 80,000 square foot building, Spike Island offers visitors a year-round programme of exhibitions, events and activities in the central gallery spaces, as well as providing working space for artists, designers and creative businesses.
- Spike Island is a partner of Tate as part of the Plus Tate network.
- The gallery is open Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm. Entrance is free.

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