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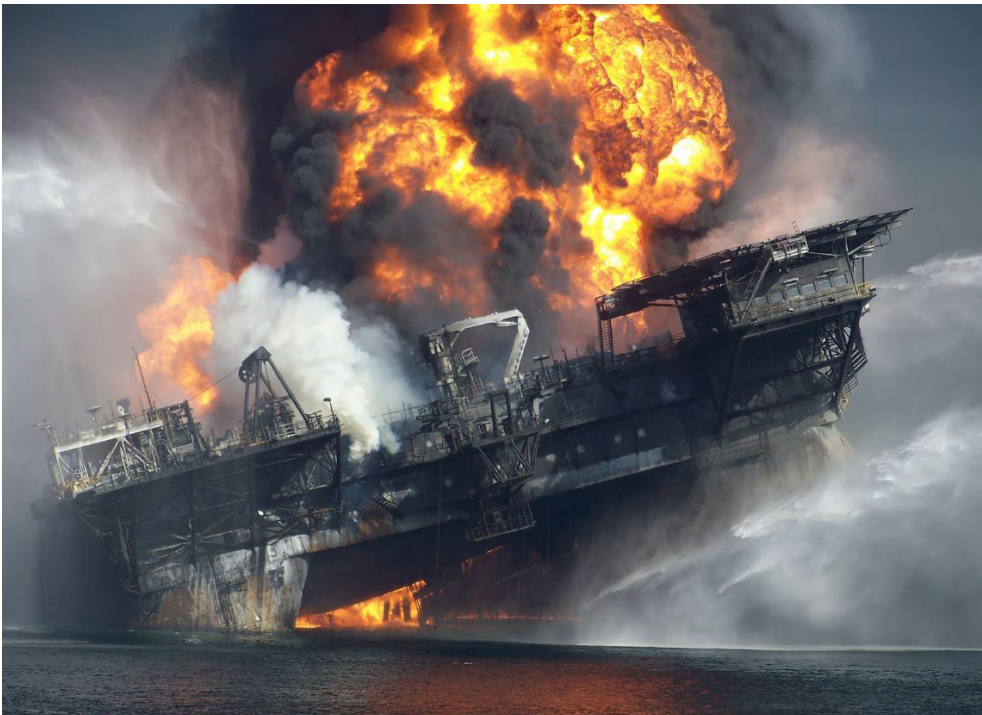
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## ***Deepwater Horizon***

Xavier Mary

September 6 - October 20, 2019



RICHMOND - 1708 Gallery announces *Deepwater Horizon*, an exhibition of sculpture, video, and appropriated objects by Belgian artist Xavier Mary. *Deepwater Horizon* borrows its name from an ultra-deepwater offshore oil rig that, while one of the deepest rigs ever drilled, culminated in the most catastrophic explosion and oil spill in U.S. history. Sculptures arduously drag from dilapidated industrial material-truck beds, insulation, soot, wheels- a retrospective capture of

automotive dysfunction and material memory. These objects become small structures to consider the near future of the fossil fuel industry and societal upheaval underway. Flames in Kuwait engulf the reflected surface of a simulated, inverted Toyota emblem in projection. A geologist expounds upon complicity, speculation, risk, and indifference in a video from the back of a pickup truck. And memorabilia exemplify the hysterical collapse of subject and object in automotive entertainment lore.

How can one examine an artifact of a situation in which they are currently embedded? How can one study an action or movement as it is performed and track its interaction with its environment as it happens? How does one comprehend something in which its scale is humanly unimaginable? Through this thought experiment, Mary's exhibition entangles interrelationships conditioned by and constructed from fossil fuel writ large: its interaction with the automotive industry, geological and ecological epochs, and the formation of mythical events and personas.<sup>1</sup>

*Deepwater Horizon* is a suspended explosion and a quiet collision of geological time, anthropocentric ecological questioning, and quasi-transcendental images of the oil and gas industry. At its core, *Deepwater Horizon* reformats how we analyze specific aspects of current and future realities; the exhibition challenges the very activity of thinking about the Petrol Age in order to explicate multiple

understandings and positions. Instead of prioritizing one extremism over another, the exhibition examines the system itself –the images, conditions, and materials in which extreme situations come to be. Deepwater Horizon proposes an auto(matic)-apocalypse already underway yet dumbed down by the platforms by which it is currently understood and registered.

Xavier Mary was born in Liège, Belgium he currently lives and works in Brussels. He studied at École de Recherche Graphique de Bruxelles achieving a Masters in Arts, Sculpture and Installation. His first solo museum exhibition, XM Temple, was in 2019 was at BPS22 in Charleroi, Belgium. Recent solo exhibitions and projects have been at Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany; Galerie Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg; and Galerie Albert Baronian, Brussels. Selected group exhibitions include Espace 251 Nord, Liège; IKOB Museum, Eupen; La Maison Rouge, Paris; Museo delle Palme, Palermo; Kunsthal Kade, Amersfoort, Netherlands; Extra City, Antwerp; and WEELS Contemporary Art Center, Brussels. Mary co-founded Diesel Project Space, a temporary project space located in an abandoned gas station on the outskirts of Liege. He has organized projects at 019 in Ghent and the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA).

This exhibition and accompanying texts are informed by and owe much to the work of Reza Negrestani, and Andy Weir among others.

For more information, please visit [www.1708gallery.org](http://www.1708gallery.org).

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