

**Doug Ashford, *Bakersfield CA*, November 14, 2015 — January 31, 2016**

Wilfried Lentz Gallery proudly presents artist, writer and teacher Doug Ashford (b. 1958, lives and works in New York) in his second solo show at the gallery, titled *Bakersfield CA*. The installation of paintings, photographs and glass panels is built from two rolls of found film that document an American family and their friends in a suburban environment. In this footage, whose origin was decided by the artist to be the city of Bakersfield in California, the normality of the daily life of the family is interrupted by the unexpected appearance of a Nazi swastika.

Between the 1890s and 1960s, the things that upheld white privilege shifted from legal racist definitions and territories backed by state violence to more psychological and mythological representations of sadistic projection and fantasy. The hyperbolic scale of this brutal shift is still felt on many levels in the United States, often as hidden and dark as the muddy mould on a flag left in the attic, rotten and persistent. The social reproduction of whiteness, although still enforced by police violence, mass incarceration and economic devastation, is now rebuilt daily in subconscious affiliation with deliberate emotional rhythms of cruelty and death. Ashford's artistic response consists of abstract tempera paintings, juxtaposed with a selected printing of the two film rolls and hung in an installation littered with protective glass panels. This emotional appraisal of an aspect of American culture tries to connect forms to what is rarely self-described, because to do so would demand a recognition of how the core of US culture is founded in racism.

Coming from a background of socially engaged public practice in the eighties and nineties as a member of the New York-based artist collective Group Material (1982-1996), Ashford took up painting in earnest after the collective ended. In the public projects of Group Material, the form of the art exhibition was challenged with its existing social and participatory purposes, contesting the accepted terrain of political life. Ashford now focuses on the mediating role of the artwork itself by re-depicting social and political expressions through a recovery of abstract painting.

In addition to his work as an artist, Doug Ashford is Associate Professor at The Cooper Union in New York City (USA) where he has taught design, sculpture and theory seminars since 1989. He has lectured internationally at numerous institutes and schools, and a selection of his writing has been collected in a publication produced on the occasion of his solo exhibition at the Grazer Kunstverein in 2013: *Doug Ashford: Writings and Conversations*.

Doug Ashford's work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions. In 2014-15 his work was shown at *Beyond the Black Square*, Whitechapel Gallery London (UK), *Future Light*, Vienna Biennial, (AT), and *We Are Living on a Star*, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo (NO). Other recent shows include: *dOCUMENTA(13)*, as well as *Abstract Possible: The Stockholm Synergies*, Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm (SE) in 2012, and *Sharjah Biennial 10*, Sharjah (AE), Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (MX) in 2011, and Malmö Konsthall (SE) in 2010.

The opening will take place Saturday, November 14th, from 5-7pm. The show runs until January 31st. For information and visuals, contact the gallery: office@wilfriedlentz.com, +31(0)104126459.