

# bernard jacobson gallery

William Tillyer and Alice Oswald

Nobody

26<sup>th</sup> April – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2018

A partnership between two art forms, *Nobody* is a unique crossover work - both a book and an exhibition of luminous watercolours. Created over three years and inspired by each other's promptings and shared ideas, *Nobody* is a watery world from which Tillyer and Oswald gave expression to the shared belief that tension is the essence of form, or as Tillyer eloquently describes, 'not competing, but travelling side by side: a shared path'.

Their theme is water, which they recreate in a collage of words and images; a rush of selves and other life forms where fluidity is given voice and form. The choice of watercolour is particularly apt, described by Oswald as 'an absence – as if the thing depicted were already elsewhere and what's left is merely a tidemark'. In Oswald, this quality is expressed in waves of language where the un-named characters assume the quality described by Oswald as 'the weather's or the water's leavings'.

*Nobody* is an alias of Odysseus, one of his lost selves, adrift and unable to get home. Oswald's words are his rhapsody; a circling shoal of sea voices which ends where Homer's epic begins. Caught between the *Odyssey* and *The Oresteia* and not knowing either story's conclusion, the poet goes on speaking, surrounded by water. Perhaps he is only an alias of Odysseus, one of his lost selves, unable to get home?

This poem is a circling shoal of sea voices, inspired by Homer's descriptions of the seam - 'the bodiless or unbounded thing' which ends at *The Odyssey's* beginning, whilst the paintings immerse us in a visionary experience of an elusive, almost abstract, lyrical and romantic world. Springing from Tillyer's belief in the shared essence of all things, the paintings are a tangible accompaniment to Oswald's poem, explored through paper, water, and pigment, resulting in a single dazzling work of words and watercolour.

*Nobody* is published by 21 Publishing an independent illustrated art book publishing company, established in 1997 by David Bowie, Sir Timothy Sainsbury, Bernard Jacobson, and Karen Wright (then editor of *Modern Painters*). *Nobody* will be available to purchase from April 2018, £25.

Previous 21 publications have included *Blimey! And It Hurts* by Matt Collings as well as the recent critically acclaimed monograph by Bernard Jacobson, Robert Motherwell: *The Making of an American*

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Giant. In addition, February of this year saw a new illustrated translation of *Against Nature* by Joris-Karl Huysmans that inspired the A Rebours illustrations seen throughout the book by William Tillyer.

Bernard Jacobson Gallery was founded in 1969 as a publisher and dealer in prints. Over nearly 50 years the gallery has exhibited many great British, American and European artists including: Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, Peter Lanyon, Robert Motherwell, Bruce McLean, Ben Nicholson, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, James Rosenquist, William Scott, Frank Stella, Pierre Soulages, William Tillyer, and Marc Vaux.

## **PRESS ENQUIRIES**

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