

GEORGE TOBIAS (1956)

Born in South Africa, George Tobias has lived and worked in London since 1984.

KESTER+BLES presents Tobias' latest work - flickybooks and paper wall hangings - in conjunction with a number of on-going and earlier pieces, including his collected diaries and a selection of objects from the installation *Bedrock*. The result is a highly personal visual archive of rarefied objects which reflect the constant flux and evolution of Tobias' work.

The *Bedrock* installation itself took Tobias over 10 year to create, and combines a range of large objects - stacked Duchamp bottle racks with clay plaques on metal hooks, a shelving unit with clay shapes resembling decaying books, and walls of stacked clay forms redolent of the piles of personal belongings left behind in concentration camps - with a series of smaller clay tablets, often presented in found picture frames. Researching resources and developing new techniques are very much part of Tobias' work, in this instance allowing him to imprint narrative imagery onto the clay before firing, either by means of rubber stamps or by photocopy toner.

Tobias' flickybooks and wall hangings are adapted from a series of short films produced with significant help from Ed Burton (www.edburton.net). Fascinated by the fact that 9/11 occurred on his birthday, Tobias retells the story, using a drop of water instead of an aeroplane. Particular elements of these books have resulted in large-scale prints, which Tobias has subsequently altered. The controlled computer-led process of reproducing images has prompted him to examine other techniques, and to use materials as disparate as Vaseline, whisky, varnishes, inks and glitter. Much like the books in the ceramic library in the *Bedrock* installation, the original story gets obscured under a wealth of detail and distortion. The viewer is left having to reconstruct a linear narrative using the clues provided by these details.

Throughout his life, Tobias has maintained a series of diaries in which he comments on current affairs by combining social and political facts with newspaper fragments, imagery taken from mass consumerism, and very personal statements. These records juxtapose people, objects and events to create a distorted yet compelling reworking of history.