

TANYA LEIGHTON

PRESS RELEASE

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DAN REES

19 March – 20 April 2013

Preview: Thursday 16 March 6 – 9pm

Tanya Leighton is pleased to present the second solo exhibition of Welsh artist Dan Rees in Berlin. Rees (b. 1982, Swansea, UK) lives and works in Berlin.

This exhibition draws together Rees' associations around the theme of solidarity and is directly inspired by two communities: the small Welsh town of Merthyr Tydfil (near Rees' hometown of Swansea) and the Central American country of Nicaragua. Inspired by a Welsh Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign poster from 1986 encountered in the Merthyr Tydfil Ironworks Museum, Rees became intrigued by this specific demonstration of solidarity. Despite their geographical distance and distinct histories, organisers in Merthyr Tydfil formed the Wales Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign in 1986 in support of the Sandinista Revolution. The campaign continues to work with trade unions, campaigners and community groups against the effects of neo-liberal globalisation in Nicaragua.

Accordingly, Rees extends his on-going interest in Merthyr Tydfil and its legacy of labour organisation, post-industrial poverty and attendant issues of class and solidarity. Rees brings attention to how even during the painful years of de-industrialisation (with the last ironworks closing in 1987) Welsh organisers empathised with the struggles of Sandinista revolutionaries and worked to bring this into dialogue in their local community.

This project began at the beginning of 2013, when Rees visited Nicaragua with his brother-in-law, also a native of the UK. Rees asked his brother-in-law, a technically proficient amateur photographer, to make photographs while they were there for this exhibition. The resultant images, presented large-scale, combine portraits with the landscape of their trip. The collaborative nature of this project displays Rees' communal engagement with the theme of solidarity.

Tanya Leighton presents these photographs alongside a booklet compiled by Rees. Enclosed within the booklet are the detailed images of pamphlets and posters Rees has photographed in the archive of the National Library in Aberystwyth of the Welsh Nicaraguan Solidarity Movement.

Rees has exhibited internationally in solo and group exhibitions at MAMbo, Bologna; GAmE, Bergamo; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo; Overgarden, Copenhagen; Yvon Lambert, Paris, Gio' Marconi, Milan; and Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; and many others. Forthcoming solo exhibitions include the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff; Oriel Mostyn, Wales; and the Gross Michael Foundation, Dallas.

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