



Left: Robert Montgomery, *POEM IN LIGHTS TO BE SCATTERED IN THE SQUARE MILE*, 2017. Wood, metal, recycled plastic and LED lighting. Right: Portrait of Robert Montgomery, photograph by Cindy Sasha.

Parasolstice – Winter Light 2017

Robert Montgomery: *POEM IN LIGHTS TO BE SCATTERED IN THE SQUARE MILE*

19 October 2017 – 18 March 2018

(Preview: Wednesday 18 October, 6–8 pm | Artist Talk: 7 pm)

Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is delighted to present Robert Montgomery's *POEM IN LIGHTS TO BE SCATTERED IN THE SQUARE MILE*, 2017, the latest addition to the **Parasolstice – Winter Light** series and his first light poem to be commissioned by a public London institution.

Known for his rhythmic texts pasted across posters on billboards and hoardings around East London, and for his dramatic light pieces and fire poems displayed throughout the world, Scottish artist Robert Montgomery brings a poetic voice to the discourse on Text Art. His eloquent and, at times, biting statements cry out about what goes on in the world. Often giving voice to a common global conscience, spurning consumerism, raging against war and injustice, he also reminds us to appreciate the natural wonders of the world. Writ large, his texts displayed on walls in public streets speak powerfully to passersby. His works have something in common with the 1960s Situationists, a revolutionary group of European avant-garde writers, artists and urban theorists who created large installations in unexpected places.

The starting point for Montgomery's site-specific work on the terrace at Parasol unit, is a consideration of place. Responding to its location and surrounding neighbourhood in contemporary time, Montgomery's light poem, constructed in wood, metal and LED lights, illuminates aspects unique to this area of Shoreditch and its history, such as the now demolished Eagle Music Hall and 'Grecian Saloon' that stood on the corner of City Road and Shepherdess Walk very near Parasol unit. As an artist who has lived and worked close to the gallery, Montgomery is conscious of the psychogeography of this area and its ongoing fusion of past and present: the City of London to the south, the 'silicon roundabout' at Old Street, alongside historical sites such as Wesley's Chapel and the grave of William Blake. One strong thread throughout Montgomery's work is how he thinks of a city as part of nature, as a 'beehive' of humans. This raises the question of what can be learned socially and ecologically by thinking of cities as natural phenomena.

Serene and intimate moments quietly illuminate Montgomery's texts. The weather in the city often informs his works: those moments when we notice a breath of air or the movement of clouds, when despite the built-up environment we feel a sense of being in nature. In the heart of a fast developing neighbourhood undergoing constant ambitious construction, Parasol unit nestles among the growing 'Manhattanization' of this area of East London. Yet, out on the terrace, at the foot of Montgomery's light poem is the water of the canal basin and above it, between the towering apartment blocks, are pockets of sky and the branches of trees, always reminding us to be present here, and that 'the city is a magic sculpture we live inside'.

Note to Editors

Artist Biography

Robert Montgomery brings a poetic voice and public-interventionist strategies to contemporary Text Art. He works across diverse media: billboards, solar-powered light pieces, fire poems, woodcuts and watercolours. He has realised major outdoor light installations on the site of the old US Air Force base at Tempelhof in Berlin, and in the old imperial port city of Kochi-Muziris in India. He was the British artist selected for both the 2012 Kochi-Muziris Biennale and the 2016 Yinchuan Biennale. A monograph on his work was published in 2015 by Distanz.

Along with the architects Allied Works, Robert Montgomery is a shortlisted finalist for the UK National Holocaust Memorial in London.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Founded in December 2004, Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is a registered educational charity and a not-for-profit institution that operates purely for the public benefit. Every year the foundation organises four challenging and thought-provoking exhibitions of works by international contemporary artists working in various media and arranges various other artistic projects. The foundation also engages with the public and its neighbouring community through a full programme of educational events. In its genuine mission to serve the public, the foundation does not bear the name of its founder, and its exhibitions do not derive from any particular private collection. Admission to all exhibitions at Parasol unit is free of charge. Thanks to its innovative model between private funding and public support, one of London's most vibrant contemporary art spaces has come to exist and thrive.

Free Admission

Parasol unit
14 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW

Opening hours:

Monday by prior arrangement
Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sunday, 12 – 5 p.m.

Directions: Tube to Old Street or Angel
Buses: 43, 205 or 214 via City Road

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