

JEREMY WAFER

Material Immaterial

8 July - 5 August

Material Immaterial is an exhibition of new work by Jeremy Wafer, coinciding with the artist's seventieth birthday and following a residency earlier this year at the NIROX Sculpture Park where the artist continues his decades-long exploration of dislocation, memory and materiality.

According to critic Sean O'Toole, Wafer's practice is "striking in its responsiveness to the particularities of South Africa's land" (*This is no place for lovely pictures*, 2022). Indeed, throughout his forty-year career, Wafer has employed topographic and oceanic references to consider the geological and sociohistorical realities and imaginaries that surround his sites of investigation.

Wafer's conceptual sculptures and site-specific installations point to the landscape and the sea as containers of memories, desires and vulnerabilities. A central work in the exhibition, titled *Fathom* (2022), a sculpture made from thirty metres of thick rope with plugs of lead casts at one-metre intervals. It is a reference to sounding lines used to measure the depth of water from boats. This tool for measurement lays tangled on the gallery floor, displacing its purpose. It is intended to highlight the artist's interest in devices used to orient oneself, to gauge, to map and for the purpose of surveillance.

For this exhibition, Wafer experiments with displacing everyday materials, such as blankets, and uses materials intimately to the earth, such as soil, oil, water, and cement, to explore how textures and scents trigger memory. These materials are also used as metaphors in the artist's reflections on precarity. In *Pile*, blankets are coated in bitumen waterproofing paint and placed on a trolley - transforming them from sources of comfort and warmth to sources of hostility. *Lime* sees canvas covered in whitewash loosely hung on the wall with forty-two dangling metal appendages, drawing on the seafaring tradition of wrapping deceased sailors in cloth with weights to allow the waters to carry their bodies to the ocean floor.

Jeremy Wafer (b. 1953, Durban, South Africa) works across sculpture, photography, video and drawing, exploring the politics and poetics of place. Rooted in South Africa's social, cultural and political geography, his work engages issues of land and territory, particularly themes of location, dislocation, possession and dispossession.

Solo exhibitions: *Arc*, Goodman Gallery, London (2022); *Index*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2017); Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2014); *Structure: Avenues and barriers of Power*, a retrospective at KZNSA Gallery, Durban (2009).

Group exhibitions: *Centre of Gravity*, The Old Soap Works, Bristol (2020); *Ampersand*, University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg (2019); *Everywhere but Here*, Cite International des Arts, Paris (2017); *What remains is Tomorrow*, The Pavilion of South Africa at the 56th Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2015); *Witness*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2014); *Views of Africa*, Smithsonian National Museum of Air and Space, Washington DC. (2013); and *20: Two Decades of South African Sculpture*, NIROX Foundation, the Cradle of Humankind, (2010).

Wafer's work features in the following public collections: the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC; South African National Gallery in Cape Town and the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Wafer studied at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (B.A Fine Art, 1979) and at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (B.A. Hons. in Art History 1980, M.A. Fine Art 1987 and PhD, 2017). He has taught in the Fine Art Department of the Technikon Natal, Durban, and at the School of Arts of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, where he was appointed Professor of Fine Art in 2011.

Wafer lives and works between London and Johannesburg.

JOHANNESBURG

163 Jan Smuts Ave, Parkwood
Johannesburg
+27 11 788 1113
jhb@goodmangallery.com
www.goodmangallery.com

CAPE TOWN

37A Somerset Road
De Waterkant
+27 21 462 7573
cpt@goodmangallery.com
www.goodmangallery.com

LONDON

26 Cork Street
London, W1S 3ND
+442081254065
ldn@goodman-galleryuk.com
www.goodmangallery.com