

JASON LARKIN PAST PERFECT

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Private View: Thursday 16 November 6-8 pm

Centred around questions of authenticity and the representation of collective histories, *Past Perfect* (2008 - 2016), is a new series of photographs by British photographer Jason Larkin, highlighting the visual presentation of war and conflict within public museums around the world.

With their vast access to knowledge, today's museums have become our modern-day cathedrals, not only concerned with historic moments, but also with ideas; notions of what the world is, and how it should be framed. They play an important, and often unquestioned role in constructing ideologies and interpreting cultural identities.

In the essay *Travels in Hyperreality*, philosopher, historian and aesthetician Umberto Eco argued that the museum diorama is potentially "*more vivid, more effective*" than the original artefact, achieving an "*illusion of absolute reality*".¹ Larkin's photographs of dioramas, reduced-scale reproductions, and audio-visual displays reflect these vivid scenes with a distant gaze, highlighting the ambiguous spaces where notions of fact and fiction can fuse, and the harsh reality of conflict can become simplified.



Castillo de San Carlos de la Cabaña (Havana, Cuba), 2016, Archival Inkjet Print, 79 x 79 cm, 31 1/8 x 31 1/8 in

Past Perfect explores the aesthetic choices taken by museums as they negotiate and build meaning through the curation of artefacts and memory. Working throughout Cuba, Egypt, Israel, UK, USA and Vietnam, all countries with unique relationships to their military histories, Larkin brings a new perspective on how our violent pasts are preserved and presented today. *Past Perfect* follows Larkin's previous projects *Tales from the City of Gold* and *Cairo Divided*, continuing to focus on the legacies of our past and how they intersect with present-day societies.

For more information and images please contact hannah@flowersgallery.com / +44 (0)20 7920 7777

1. Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, Picador, 1987.

ABOUT JASON LARKIN

Jason Larkin (b. 1979) is a British photographer internationally recognised for his long term social documentary projects and environmental portraiture. His immersive process and slow approach allow for comprehensive bodies of work that reveal and frame important social, economic and political issues. His work is often concerned with contextualising present realities through historical legacies. After completing his M.A. in 2007, Larkin moved to Egypt. *Past Perfect* has been widely recognised with awards, including the PDN New Portraiture Award in 2011. *Cairo Divided*, a unique and freely distributed bilingual newspaper explored the capital's rapidly-mutating urban landscape. Exhibitions have included the Brighton Photo Biennial 2012 and the Hereford Photography Festival Commission in 2011.



From left, *First Aliya Museum* (Zikhron Ya'akov, Israel), 2014; *Veterans Museum* (Trinidad, Cuba), 2016, both Archival Inkjet Print, 79 x 79 cm, 31 1/8 x 31 1/8 in



From left, *October 1973 War Museum #1* (Cairo), 2010; *Hanoi War Museum* (Hanoi, Vietnam), 2016 both Archival Inkjet Print, 79 x 79 cm, 31 1/8 x 31 1/8 in

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Opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm