

INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We Have Never Had It So Good

An exhibition by guest curator Noëmi Lakmaier at The Pigeon Wing, November 2010.

We Have Never Had It So Good, takes Harold Macmillan's (UK Prime Minister 1957 – 1963) often misquoted citation *'most of our people have never had it so good'* as its starting point, and re-contextualises it within the contemporary economic and political framework of the credit crunch and global economic downturn.

During his inaugural address to the conservative party in 1957, Macmillan painted a rosy picture of the economy. A boom in production had led to an increase in wages and investment. Yet he warned that inflation was the country's biggest problem of the era.

Macmillan's assertion has reached a renewed poignancy. We have been shown just how reliant many industrial economies have become on public consumption and consumer credit. At the height of the crisis, the global financial downturn was described by politicians and economists as the hangover after a sustained period of overindulgence.

As sales in auction houses plummeted, the effects on the commercial art market have been clear, but what has been the effect on individual artists around the world? How has the way art is being produced changed? Have reduced sales and the withdrawals of public funding been detrimental to artists' livelihoods? Has the downturn created new roles for artists and generated new opportunities?

We Have Never Had It So Good strives to investigate these questions through the eyes of one hundred artists selected from the UK and internationally.

Responding to the exhibition's theme, each artist will choose a box that once contained an everyday consumer item and create an artwork inside that box. The box will then be resealed and sent to The Pigeon Wing. Ranging from toothpaste boxes to the packaging of washing machines, each box will tell an individual story about its place of origin and the journey it made to London. The boxes will be opened up to reveal the artworks inside and installed at The Pigeon Wing, creating a 'warehouse' of international artists' responses to how art and the experience of being an artist might be evolving in light of the current global financial crisis.

We Have Never Had It So Good will also extend beyond its physical manifestation at The Pigeon Wing. The exhibition's online presence will include a digital archive of the works, live streaming of the exhibition and a blog for comments and discussion.

Noëmi Lakmaier is a London based practitioner. Live and participatory art, site-specific interventions and concept-driven curatorial projects are core interests within her diverse practice. She has exhibited widely both in the UK and internationally. www.noemilakmaier.co.uk

Based in South London, **The Pigeon Wing** is a platform for facilitating the discussion of art. Focussing on emerging artists, The Pigeon Wing presents an annual series of exhibitions and events. For more information please visit <http://www.thepigeonwing.co.uk>.

Application Process:

If you would like to be considered for this exhibition please submit:

- A brief statement about your work and its relation to **We've Never Had It So Good's** theme. Describe the box you might use and details of the form the work will take. (300 words max)
- Your contact details including your country of residence and if you live in the UK your postcode.
- A link to your website OR if you don't have a website up to 6 small (1MB or less) jpeg images.

Please send all the above to wehaventhaditsogood@hotmail.co.uk and put **We Have Never Had It So Good** in the subject line.

Proposals for work in any medium are welcome. We are particularly interested in innovative and unexpected ways of working within a box, but please keep in mind that you will have to post your piece to London. There are no size restrictions, but to keep the costs of return postage reasonable, please aim to keep the weight of your piece below 5kg.

The deadline for applications is Monday 11th of October 2010 at 23:59 (UK time). Late applications will not be considered.

The exhibition will open at the Pigeon Wing in November 2010 (date to be confirmed). It is the artist's responsibility to ensure work arrives at the venue in time.

Funding for this project is pending, therefore we are currently unable to confirm that we will be able to return work to artists free of charge at the end of the exhibition.

If you have any questions regarding this brief or if you require it in an alternative format please contact us at wehaventhaditsogood@hotmail.co.uk