

We've Never Had It So Good

ARTIST BRIEF

A joint call for submissions by the Pigeon Wing and Noëmi Lakmaier

About the Pigeon Wing

The Pigeon Wing is a platform for facilitating the discussion of art and aims to facilitate the realisation of interesting ideas. It presents an annual series of exhibitions curated by both invited and house curators. It also delivers sequential events from progressive projects as well as singular events including film screenings, talks, performances and critiques.

www.thepigeonwing.co.uk

About Noëmi Lakmaier

Noëmi Lakmaier is a London based practitioner. Live and participatory art, site-specific interventions and concept lead curatorial projects are core interests in her diverse practice. She has exhibited widely both in the UK and internationally. In 2007 she co-founded the site-specific artist's group *Final Intervention* for which she won the NAN New Collaborations Bursary.

www.noemilakmaier.co.uk

Introduction and Concept

The Pigeon Wing has invited artist-curator Noëmi Lakmaier to curate *We've Never Had It So Good*, which 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 downturn.

The original quote derives from Macmillan's inaugural address to the conservative party in 1957. A boom in production had led to an increase in wages and investment. While painting a rosy picture of the economy Macmillan also warned that inflation was the country's biggest problem of the era. In light of the recent international financial crisis Macmillan's often misquoted assertion has reached renewed, somewhat absurd, poignancy. The credit crunch has shown just how reliant many industrial economies had become on public consumption and consumer credit. At the height of the crisis, the global financial downturn marked by reduced

production, collapsing prices and widespread redundancies was described by some politicians and economists as the hangover after a sustained period of overindulgence.

As sales in auction houses plummeted, there could be little doubt that the recent financial crisis was being felt in the commercial art market, but what effect is the downturn and its after-mass having on individual artists around the world, both as consumers and as the makers of consumable goods and providers of services? How might the way art is being produced change because of it? Will reduced sales and the withdrawals of public funding and private sponsorship be detrimental to artists' livelihoods, or will the downturn create new roles for artists and generate new opportunities?

Call for Artists

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

We will approach some artist directly the rest will be selected through an open call.

Selected artist will be invited to create one piece of work for the exhibition. They will be asked to choose a box that once held an everyday consumer item bought by them (a toaster, a scanner, a pair of shoes, a printer, a mobile phone, a power-drill, a tube of tooth-paste etc.) and to create a piece of artwork inside it.

Each participating artist is free to respond specifically to the article once sold in their chosen box, or to use the box to make a more general comment on the theme.

The artwork must be contained within the box, and the box resealed and posted to the Pigeon Wing in London.

The exhibition will see the boxes opened up to reveal the artwork inside, and installed in the space to create a 'warehouse' of international artists' responses to consumer culture, the global financial crisis and questions of how art and the experience of being an artist might be changing.

How to apply

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

- A brief statement about your work and why you would like to take part in *We've Never Had It So Good*. Describe the kind of box you might use and how you envisage responding to the exhibition's theme within it. (300 words max)

Proposals in any media are welcome, and we are particularly interested in exciting, 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 cost of postage reasonable, and the backs of those installing the work healthy please aim to keep the weight of your piece below 5kg.

- Your contact details including your country of residence.
- 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 wehaveneverhaditsogood@hotmail.co.uk and put *We've Never Had It So Good* in the subject line.

Fees and expenses

The project is currently unfunded, we can therefore not offer participating artists a fee and cannot guarantee that we can cover any expenses.

However, we are applying for funding, and if successful we may be able to offer artists a small contribution towards production and postage costs.

Timeline

Early September 2010	-	application deadline
Mid September 2010	-	successful artists informed
Late October 2010	-	work to arrive in London at the Pigeon Wing
November 2010	-	exhibition opens
December 2010	-	exhibition closes
January 2011	-	work is returned to the artists (funds permitting)

If you have any questions regarding this brief or if you require it in an alternative format please contact The Pigeon Wing or Noëmi Lakmaier.