

THE WAPPING PROJECT BANKSIDE

PRESS RELEASE: EDGAR MARTINS

The Rehearsal of Space & The Poetic Impossibility to Manage the Infinite

25 April –29 May 2014 at The Wapping Project Bankside,
65a Hopton Street, SE1 9LR

Private view: Thursday 24 April, 6.30 – 8.30 PM



Edgar Martins, Space glove, Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre (Star City, Russian Federation), 2014

The Wapping Project Bankside is delighted to announce the international premiere of *The Rehearsal of Space & the Poetic Impossibility to Manage the Infinite* (2014), Edgar Martins' most anticipated series to date and the result of a long-term collaboration with the European Space Agency. *The Rehearsal of Space* is the most comprehensive photographic survey ever produced about a leading scientific and space exploration organisation.

In 2012, Edgar Martins was granted unparalleled access to ESA and its partners' programs, including the microgravity, telecommunication, human spaceflight, lunar and Mars exploration programs. Over the past two years, he has travelled to 20 locations across the UK, The Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain, Russia, Kazakhstan and French Guyana to shoot in classified facilities such as test centres, robotics departments, space simulators, laboratories, launch sites and platforms, astronaut training centres and satellite assembly rooms.

The photographs were shot using long exposures (up to one hour) and a 10x8", large format camera. Their clean composition and hyper-real sharpness contrast greatly with the veil of secrecy and enigma that usually shrouds space-related activity. Although rarely seen by the public, the technology and facilities in *The Rehearsal of Space* look strangely familiar, underlining popular culture's influence in shaping our understanding of space exploration (the artist often cites fortuitous references such as Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity* or Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*).

Martins' rigorous, study-like exposé reveals the sheer scale this global scientific endeavour, perhaps the greatest of our time. Altogether, there are over 90 photographs in the series, ranging from the macro – rockets, satellites, training modules, fuel rooms, to micro-components barely visible to the human eye. As always, his approach is both, descriptive and speculative, and it is somewhere between fact and fiction that the photographs take on their full meaning. *The Rehearsal of Space* documents our quest to penetrate the astrophysical reality of the universe in order to better understand time, space, and matter. In doing so, Martins highlights the wider politics of space exploration, the ever-growing role of science and technology in our society and our relationship with the unknown, whilst opening up wider questions around epistemology, metaphysics and ultimately humanity's conception of itself.

The Rehearsal of Space and The Poetic Impossibility to Manage the Infinite (24x32cm, hardback, clothbound, 184 pp., 86 colour plates, essays by John Gribbin, João Seixas & Sérgio Mah) will be published by La Fabrica/The Moth House in May 2012. This publication will be available in a bilingual edition in English and Spanish.

For press information and images please contact Jules Wright:

jules@thewappingproject.com or 07712 545981

About Edgar Martins

Born in 1977 in Évora, Edgar Martins grew up in Macau (China). He moved to the UK in 1996, where he completed an MA in Photography and Fine Art at the Royal College of Art. Recent exhibitions include the 54th Venice Biennale, PS1 MoMA (New York), the Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian (Paris), The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation – CAM (Lisbon), EDP Foundation (Lisbon), Centro Cultural Hélio Oiticica (Rio de Janeiro), The New Art Gallery (Walsall), The Gallery of Photography (Dublin) and The Wapping Project Bankside

(London). His work can be found in numerous public, private and corporate collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), the National Media Museum (Bradford, UK), the Dallas Museum of Art (Dallas, USA); the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon), Carmignac Foundation (Paris), amongst others.

Edgar Martins works and lives in the UK.

Images





From top to bottom:

Edgar Martins, *S5 payload preparation complex – spacecraft fuelling bay, CSG-Europe's Spaceport, Kourou (French Guiana), 2014*

Edgar Martins, *Interior of Large Space Simulator, vacuum chamber, ESA-ESTEC, Noordwijk (The Netherlands), 2014*

Edgar Martins, *Astronaut dressing room, where the Sokol spacesuits are stored, Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre (Star City, Russian Federation), 2014*

Edgar Martins, *Mobile gantry for the Vega launcher, seen from underneath, CSG-Europe's Spaceport, Kourou (French Guiana), 2014*

Tel. 020 7981 9851, info@thewappingprojectbankside.com
www.thewappingprojectbankside.com
 Text 07712545981

