



**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**MATTHEW HOULDING: THE OCEANIC**

**11 January - 09 February 2013  
Preview 10 January 6.30-8.30pm**

Ceri Hand Gallery is delighted to announce the second solo exhibition by Matthew Houlding at the gallery, featuring new sculpture, wall based reliefs and drawings.

The title of the exhibition draws its source from the 'Oceanic Hotel', in Mombasa, Kenya, designed by emigre German architect Ernst May. The 'Oceanic Hotel' was one of May's final East African projects. Now demolished, this Modernist building's legacy infiltrates the exhibition, from its logo (a Seahorse) to the concrete lattice work and its tropical context. Houlding's lifelong association with East Africa also informs this new work, from the colour palette of blues, yellows and oranges to the inclusion of found materials and objects in order to create graphic sculptural assemblages that reflect on an architecture of place.

The new floor based sculptures imply usage - they are from somewhere, belong somewhere. Incorporating timber, Perspex and painted surfaces, the new work is peppered with multiple holes, viewing points and transparent sections that enable the viewer to look through, around and beyond each object. Treating the edges of particular surfaces in a different coloured paint or material creates a cartoon like frame, highlighting a fragmented narrative that alludes to how memory and imagination are connected and constructed.

This cartoon reference is continued in the graphic tufts of grass sprouting from blocks of wood in **Seahorse**, 2012, and in the wooden palm leaves curtaining **Poolside**, 2012. As in all of Houlding's work, nature is never very far away from man-made ideologies, complimenting human endeavour but poised to potentially thwart it. **Moorish Idol**, 2012, is named after a tropical fish and incorporates the lines and colours of the fish (electric blue and sunshine yellow) into a dynamic abstract wall assemblage that echoes a superhero emblem.

The swimming pool is also a recurring motif within Houlding's work, suggesting a portal to a better time, a better place. Painted vacuum formed plastic pool shapes sit at the heart of five new wall based works titled **Teardrop**, 2012. The blue pool harbours an inherent optimism, sharply contained by brown laminate wood and delicate latticed Perspex: the dream is forever present, forever promising, forever withholding. The Oceanic also clearly refers to the sea and its complex eco-systems are reflected in the precise way each work is constructed, drawing disparate materials together to co-exist, to offer a new solution, a better future. **Seahorse**, 2012, is a new large floor based sculpture which could pose as the reception desk for the hotel. The hole within its larger structure is portrait-like and the oversized table is half perch, half umbrella. **Poolside**, 2012, could be a view into a palm covered pool terrace, complete with Hawaiian shirt and sunglasses draped over a corner. **Neu Africa**, 2012, is a domestic scale sculpture incorporating a hand chiselled robotic futuristic mask, inspired by holiday souvenirs, the Bauhaus logo and the influence of African art on European art. New wall based relief works **Under the Black Sun of Joy**, **New Cairo** and **Oceanic** (all 2011/2012) sit somewhere between landscape, diagram and architectural rendering, layering images and materials to evoke a history and a memory of a time gone by, with the loaded potential of imagination and the pursuit of a new future.

**For more information or images please contact Hannah Pierce on [info@cerihand.co.uk](mailto:info@cerihand.co.uk) or 0207 240 5482**