

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RIVER STREET: DANIEL PHILLIPS
January 12 – February 19, 2012
Reception: Thursday, January 12, 6-8pm



DODGEgallery is pleased to present *River Street*, an exhibition of new video installations by Daniel Phillips. This is the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery and his New York debut.

For nearly two years Phillips' studio was an historic, abandoned elevator tower on the site of a largely demolished paper mill. The site, exposed to the elements, stands dilapidated at the edge of a major commercial development. During his time at River Street, Phillips used landscape and buildings as the main source for his studio practice. Digging, photographing, and rehabilitating the inside of the old tower became rituals of manual labor.

Videos built from high-resolution photographs reflect Phillips' impressions of the site as well as document his solitary practice over the course of two years at River Street. Vivid moving imagery of landscape and building flickers and skips through time. Projecting his videos back onto the surfaces of the site, Phillips' layered imagery explores the tension between the alluring and yet impenetrable nature of abandoned spaces like River Street. In Phillips' work, documentation and intervention of both site and process is deeply intertwined.

Phillips' exhibition, *River Street*, is a dramatic, darkened installation of four suspended concrete screens featuring imagery created during his time at the tower. The heavily textured surfaces of the slabs are embedded with protruding debris, including rock, concrete, roots, steel, chain, and brick all excavated from the site. The front side of the slabs appear like ancient artifacts and hang from industrial hoists suspended in action and time. Dimly lit, the commanding scale of these forms, which function as frozen artifacts and floating video screens, inspire a sense of awe. Throughout, Phillips seeks to encapsulate the marvel he experienced when encountering such an historically rich space that was once abuzz with activity and now stands in ruins.

His laborious activity at the tower was a way for Phillips to connect with and activate the site, infusing a sense of life within and around the abandoned landscape. Phillips' search for River Street's true identity parallel his search for a meaningful studio practice. Phillips writes,

A lot has changed and not much has changed. I continue to mine for answers from the site but it seems there are none. What have I learned? I have dug so much. I found rusted steel, rocks, bricks. I brought in fresh dirt, volcanic tuff, built a reflecting pool, brought the river a little bit closer to River Street, but still it is just me here, and the cars go by indifferent, like the river. There are certain moments when I feel so much for this place, usually when I first get here on a sunny day, and the dust in the pool has settled overnight and you can see to the bottom, the mud covered bricks and stone and leaves which have sunk after days circling the surface. Isn't it enough to be here, to do my work, What do I expect I should learn? Am I any wiser after almost a year of coming here?

A struggle to physically connect his practice with the rituals of daily labor and human activity that for centuries defined River Street pervades Phillips' work. While the projections offer a sense of energy and renewal, they pass ghost-like over fossilized, unmoving ground.

Image: Daniel Phillips, *River Street*, 2011, video projection on debris, dimensions variable

