

# IF THEY FALL

James Newitt

**rosalux @ Story Hotel\*\*\*\*\***

**Wriezener Straße 12**

**13359 Berlin**

**25 September – 9 October**

**Wed - Sat, 3 - 6 pm**

**Genuine 1 – 4, 2010**

Archival digital prints

50 x 50 cm

Photography by Sarah Jones

**If They Fall, 2010**

HDV installation

18:30 mins

Stereo Sound

Sound in collaboration with Pat Beretta

The artist would like to thank Ed Hill, Aaron O'Connor, the people at Camp Florentine and Still Wild Still Threatened; Kelly Oakley, Rob and Greg; Pat Beretta, Sarah Jones, Frank Miller and Glenn Barkley; Jaecki Lindenau, Tiny Domingos.

James Newitt was born in Hobart, Tasmania in 1981. His exhibition history includes: *Primavera*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2010; *In The Balance: Art for a Changing World*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2010; *Stories of Celebration and Dissent*, rosalux - the Berlin based art office, Berlin, 2009 (solo); *show me the truth and I'll show you more of the same*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 2009 (solo); *Handle With Care*, 2008 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art; *I notice these little things, how they change*, Monash University Faculty Gallery, Melbourne, 2008 (solo); *Ten Days on the Island*, Hobart, 2007; *Eternal Beautiful Now*, Sherman Galleries, Sydney 2007; and the *Next Wave Festival*, Melbourne, 2006.

James has received state and national funding grants for individual and collaborative projects. In 2008 he undertook a 3-month studio residency at the Australia Council for the Arts, Los Angeles studio. In 2009 he was awarded the Qantas Foundation, Encouragement of Contemporary Art Award, in 2006 the Tasmanian Artist Prize for the City of Devonport, Art Prize and in 2010 the City of Hobart Art Prize. James lectures in Visual Communication at the University of Tasmania, School of Art and is represented by Criterion Gallery, Hobart.

[www.jnewitt.com](http://www.jnewitt.com)

[www.criteriongallery.com.au](http://www.criteriongallery.com.au)

**rosalux**  
the Berlin based art office

# IF THEY FALL

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**25 September –**

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**rosalux**

If. They. Fall.

*If They Fall* is the beginning of something, an unfinished statement, weighty with consequence. It is also the end of a question, one hinged on, and awaiting action. As the title for Newitt's video, it is both, but the two halves don't make a whole – more likely a hole. Nothing is given or explained, nothing is answered, we remain disconnected to location and position as a landscape unfolds around us. Objectivity seems an unworthy compass for orienteering such a perfidious narrative. The work offers us a relationship solely with our own ambivalence. Even as we are *handled* by the imagery, it still feels as if it is dependent on us, whether they fall or not.

*If They Fall* is at once nature documentary, landscape painting and gestural portrait. The artist, who is in a sense, a local in the Tasmanian forest, remains unseen. From darkness emerges the smallest activity, the smallest flame, a silent, obscured statement. Features of landscapes are changing without violence or shock. We are small and we are *taken*, forced by the invisible artist to remain passive, to a new wilderness both sublime and surreal. And then, back in the darkness we grow, the focus is sharpened. Mechanised industry roars, we rear up to watch from the distance. This tangible labour, melodic, designed, drawing new lines in the earth. Diesel-fuelled machines of a forestry industry become the natural inhabitants of this space, which is now at its most beautiful, as it burns.

The removal of the viewer from this unreality is inconsistent, at first silent and small, then as the landscape is conquered, heroically? Unfeelingly? We begin to rage alongside the forest fires, rally oil-blooded-insects to work, passing trophies of severed forest, deftly, in the night as if each log were weightless. Machines swing, repeat, hypnotic, beautiful. It is absolute control and ultimately, destruction. It is as if we can watch from above, our own ambivalence pass from hand to hand, with and without the victory of a baton.

In the final two minutes everything changes. Perhaps it is a curtain that falls? Or the penny that drops? Whatever it is, it descends. Unreal space is defeated by the din of reality, personalities, voices, opinions, ideals, guilt, anger, apathy, economy. We are cut down to size, and in the end, nothing falls. It is still an *if*.

**Sarah Jones is a writer, curator and artist based in Hobart, Tasmania.**



**If They Fall, 2010**



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