

JIMMIE DURHAM

SPROVIERI - LONDON



Above: JIMMIE DURHAM, arts, media and sports, 2010. Installation view at Sprovieri, London. Right: JIMMIE DURHAM: Second Life, 2010. Wooden table, wooden golf club, plastic bands, a book, 73 x 60 x 110 cm. All courtesy Sprovieri, London.

The US government, the oil industry and Donald Trump all come under scrutiny in Jimmie Durham's exhibition at Sprovieri. A set of oil drums — a recurring motif in Durham's

work — dominates the space. Several are tipped over, spilling a thick paint mixture across the floor, while another has been converted into a giant savings tin, with a cheerful hand-painted sign stating "coins only please!" placed on its lid. The drums reference Durham's Cherokee heritage and the enforced displacement of native Americans by the US government out of a quest for oil; yet they also bring to mind the more recent disastrous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

North America is then linked to Scotland in a set of sculptural works that combine golf clubs and pieces of Scottish memorabilia in makeshift forms. Despite their somewhat comical appearance, the pieces allude to a serious matter: the eviction threats faced by residents in rural Aberdeenshire in order to accommodate a luxury golf resort owned by the Trump Organization. This situation in turn echoes the Oka Crisis in Quebec in the '90s, when the Mohawk community in Oka disputed the expansion of a golf course onto a piece of land containing a Mohawk burial ground.

Durham handles these sensitive political issues with a light touch — raising questions

while avoiding doctrine or rage. If he is angry about these matters, and one would assume he is, he uses humor and wit as a means of attack, rather than overt aggression. The complex layers within the work become explicit in *Shirt Poem* (2010). In text written densely in felt-tip across the back of a white shirt, Durham eloquently skips from a discussion around the heritage of cotton to a dissection of the word 'media,' before pondering the role of the artist within an artwork. He concludes that the "artist's intentions are not the entire story," and deftly invites his audience to join the conversation.

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