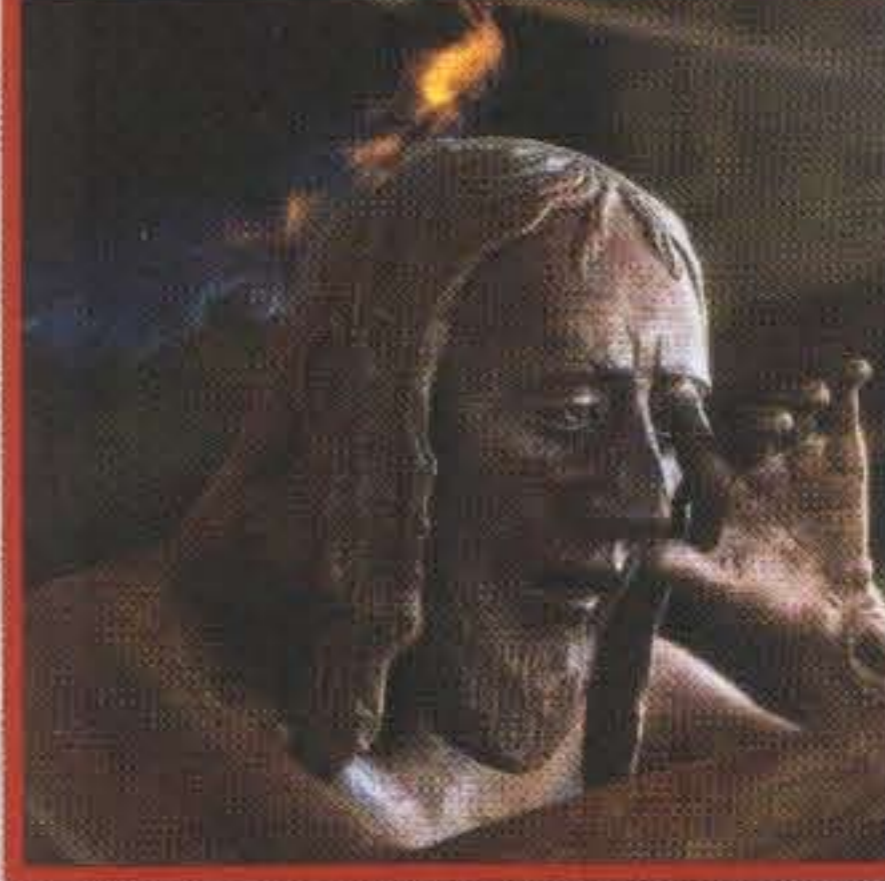
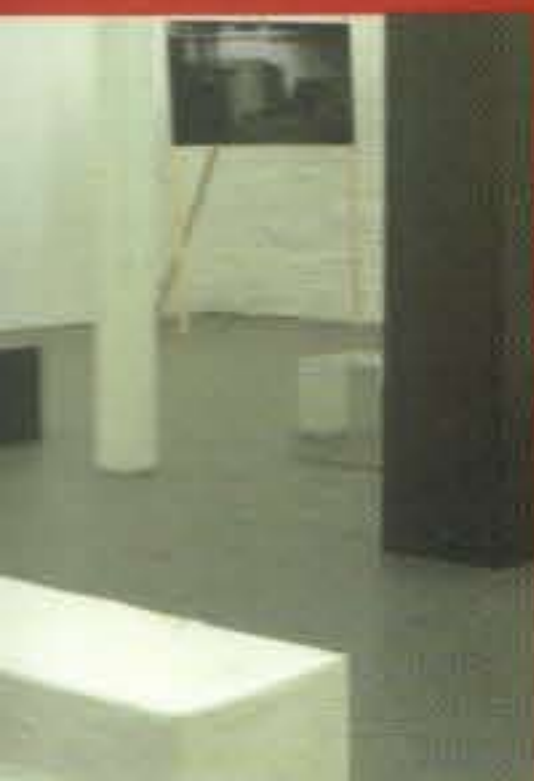
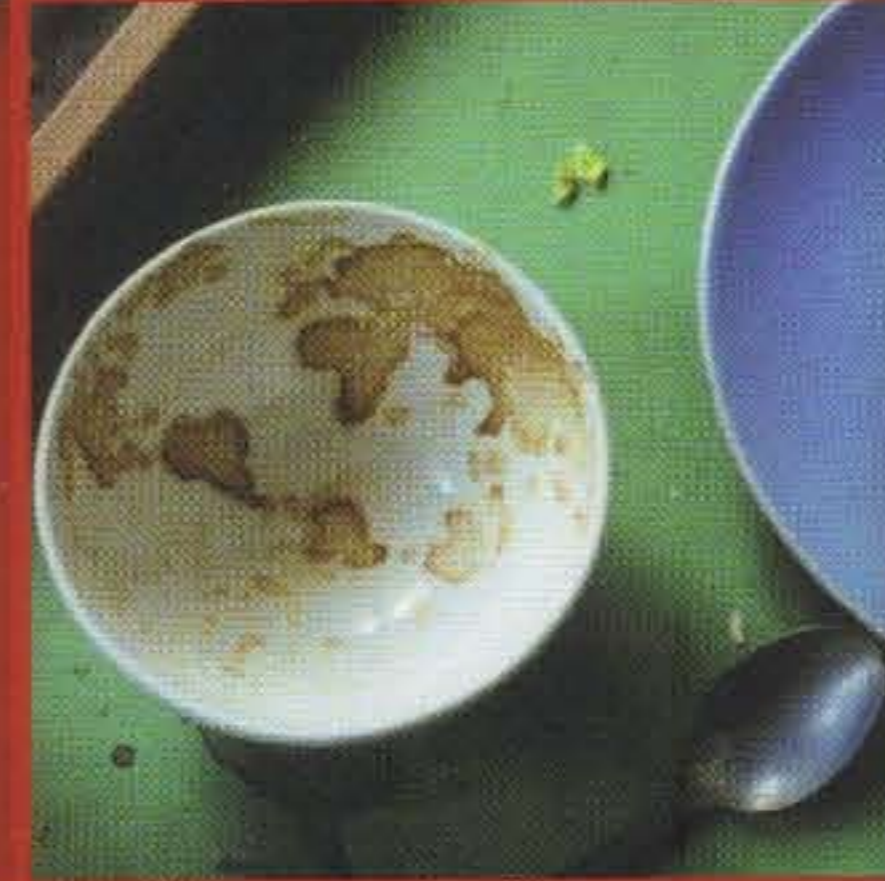


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PLUS

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 der Stiftung Vordemberge-Gildewart
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Since 2005 James Aldridge has been working in isolation in a Swedish forest to a soundtrack of heavy metal. Having been a fan in his early teens, Aldridge recently rediscovered this music as a kind of nostalgia but is now finding himself increasingly involved on a more comprehensive level. As a genre, heavy metal remains on the periphery of the mainstream, allowing musicians to work without many of the restrictions associated with more commercial enterprises. Aldridge takes inspiration from the serious, heartfelt nature of the music and the rather contradictory, often clichéd nature of some of the imagery and subject matter.

Having spent much of his time surrounded by nature, the type of imagery Aldridge now presents us with has inevitably been altered. The choice to make work in a relative wilderness has allowed him to become immersed in his subject matter and as a result there has been a shift in his relationship to it. Early works show an idealised and harmonious engagement with the beauty of the natural world. However, this has now given way to a more sinister and macabre portrayal, suggestive of a more complex relationship with his environment, altering and confusing the exchanges between the characters and wildlife within the works themselves.

Landscapes that form the backdrop for Renaissance painting are also of interest to Aldridge, serving to illustrate the ways in which artists have previously engaged with and documented, the natural world. John James Audubon's 19th Century paintings are an example of a studied, scientific approach to documenting the natural world. A sense of wonder and a desire to create an accurate portrayal, sees dead specimens performing the roles of their living counterparts, resulting in images that reside somewhere between fact and fiction.

Pictorial cliché and iconography have always been an important concern for Aldridge, stemming from a desire to find a point where the familiar or over-used can become ambiguous and free of irony. The image of the crow, therefore, as symbol of death and disaster is particularly fascinating to Aldridge. New works foreground such birds as protagonists, recasting them from incidental bit players, such as the crows and magpies in a Breughel, or the goldfinches skulking in the scrub of a Piero della Francesca, to central characters.

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Raining Blood I, 2006, Öl auf Leinwand, 250 x 190 cm,
John Jones Collection

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High On Fire, 2006, Öl auf Leinwand, 250 x 290 cm,
Courtesy David Risley Gallery, London

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A Murder of Crows, 2006, Papiercollage, 760 x 345 cm,
Courtesy David Risley Gallery, London

Text courtesy of David Risley Gallery





