

GUILLOCHON GALLERY presents

The Lunar Society



Curated By Sinta Tantra

18 - 22 January 2012 (Preview evening: Tuesday 17 January | 6 - 9 pm)

Guillochon Gallery | Booth P2 | Art Projects | London Art Fair

Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington, N1 0QH

Jessica Holmes | Jonathan McLeod | Liane Lang | Sian Hislop | Tim Phillips | Veronica Smirnoff

"It was a movement of transition. It flourished for a relatively brief time, perhaps two generations, but produced long lasting consequences - raising hope and questions that are still with us today." (Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science*)

Guillochon Gallery presents, *The Lunar Society* an exhibition of new works by artists: Jessica Holmes, Jonathan McLeod, Liane Lang, Philip Rutter, Sian Hislop, Tim Phillips and Veronica Smirnoff.

In late eighteenth century Birmingham, the meetings of a few fertile minds changed the spirit of an industrial age. Richard Holmes' book, *The Age of Wonder* makes much reference to *The Lunar Society* which met every month for lively dinner conversations and debates bringing together ideas of philosophy, arts, science and commerce. They were led by figures such as physician Erasmus Darwin, entrepreneur Matthew Boulton, engineer James Watt, radical polymath Joseph Priestly and innovative potter Josiah Wedgwood.

Enthused by the passionate adventures of many of these intellectuals as well as the new paradigm of Romantic Science, these artists today give a contemporary interpretation on the historical narrative on the brink of such an age when science, art and the machine come together in new and powerful ways.

Jessica Holmes creates mixed media paintings, where elements of collage create fields, planes and ambiguities of perspective. She draws on a wide variety of intellectual and artistic sources for her work, including the psychological techniques of Hollywood horror films, the obsessive repetitions of fractals and Dutch vanitas painting, as well as her own travels in the Northwest frontier, Siberia and the Silk Road. These are subverted to create scenes of absence and loss.

Jonathan McLeod. Issues relating to life, death, the planet and the universe are depicted in McLeod's work. Sometimes, especially on long-haul flights you can find yourself above one type of cloud and below another. The first time McLeod experienced this as a child, he asked his father if they were in Heaven. His father turned to the man sitting beside him and said "I think I have some explaining to do with him". Three days later he sat McLeod down and delivered a lecture on quantum physics. The first sentence was "Space is infinite and very, very cold". All the ideas about God he had vanished. The man on the aeroplane McLeod later learned, was Robert Oppenheimer."

Liane Lang. Lang's work takes the form of print, film and installation. Rooted in animation it is peopled with figures and props, life-like yet not real, which are created in the studio. She places these semi-inhabitants in historical spaces and with monuments and statues, creating narratives and references to historic individuals and events. "I am interested in the role of figurative sculpture, which is often imbued with special powers such as religious figures, which become the subject of devotion, political monuments"

Philip Rutter. Rutter's practice embraces liminal spaces of creativity and employs the observation system of science through sculpture to explore the personal crises we put ourselves through on the journeys we make through the everyday. In order to progress, one must employ the process of separation. The previous social position or status from which an individual draws their identity must become extinct to allow a vulnerability to the new. Rites of passage or more specifically *liminality* is a transitional space in-between, where one is neither here nor there, betwixt and between.

Sian Hislop's paintings are concerned with memory and transience, with a particular fascination for the imagery of the journey in its physical, psychological and personal sense. They are executed in acrylic inks in a palette of dripping rainbow hues overlaid with glimmering oil on paper. "My depictions of rock gods mid-pelvic thrust, abandoned gasoline stations and giant dirty advertising hoardings are all part of a larger exploration; a kitsch dystopian vision mapping the echoes and the ruins of phallogocentric Americana."

Tim Phillips. Phillips meticulously constructed sculptures reference ethereal symbols of veneration, both real and virtual from materials allied to status and mercenary empowerment. Crafted from many finishes including corporate veneers, neon under-glow lighting through to artificial plant arrangements Phillips manufactures an ambivalent union between worlds of culture and belief, commercialism and the archaic forms of religious authority.

Veronica Smirnoff uses the traditional medium of Egg Tempera to paint onto gessoed wood panel, an ancient technique historically associated with Russian and Greek Icon-painting and still employed by the Orthodox community. "My work references the aesthetic and allegorical traditions of this visual culture. It maintains a symbolic appearance which is disrupted by incorporation of imagery and stylistic elements from other sources, including early renaissance and miniature painting, folk art, cartoons, the media and contemporary fashion."

*A limited number of complementary tickets are available for the preview evening and entry to the fair. For tickets and more information about The Lunar Society at Art Projects | London Art Fair please email or contact Chris Guillochon on 0750 642 9092