



## Information on Ceri Hand Gallery Artists

### Samantha Donnelly

Samantha Donnelly's work is concerned with relationships within and between sculpture, drawing, collage and lens-based practice. Her starting points are simple; from something present in the home, a magazine advert, vintage jewellery, mementos, or found illustrations. Her interest is in reconfiguring some aspect of what it is, by creating it again in an altered state - as a new entity, as a mimetic (re-)construction, as partial homage. Often this process is repeated or multiplied by being made into a set of works with a similar source. The works produced have a reference to their past but have undergone change, albeit a slight shift or total metamorphosis. Therefore the final outcomes of this process are often precarious with disturbances and inconsistencies, suggesting dislocated narratives; some utterly fragmented and destroyed, others decadent and lavish, reminiscent of the Baroque.

### Eleanor Moreton

Eleanor Moreton's paintings draw on historical events, international fables, memories, literature and found images. She interrogates our notions of self and home - that which is often deeply sentimental but can also be a place of oppression and abuse. The Austro-Hungarian Empire features heavily in her recent work as a locus for exploring this contradiction. Her Queen paintings are of authoritative women that possess a quality Moreton thinks of as the symbolic masculine: in some instances this may be masculine attire, in some it's their voice. Moreton draws on Bette Davis, the writers Vita Sackville-West (a cross-dresser) and Daphne du Maurier, as well as singing Queens Kathleen Ferrier, Maria Callas, Emmylou Harris and Dusty Springfield. *Fancy Queen with Orange Lips* presents a young Elizabeth II morphed into an African mask, in an attempt to turn her sweet, smiling face into something more powerful and challenging.

### Doug Jones

Working on an impressive scale, utilising domestic craft and consumable goods, Jones sculptures and installations invite us to reflect on personal and collective desire in the context of mass consumerism and its global impact. Challenging us to consider what happens when we push ourselves to the edge of reason, Jones' tongue in cheek take on how innocent belief systems can lead to power corrupt, provide commanding encounters. Drawing on European ecclesiastical references and more recent shocking media imagery such as Mugabe's rebels wreaking havoc in Toyotas, Jones creates disconcerting myths and insights into belief systems and the shadowy narratives of concealed worlds - whether that be the church or British holidaymaker traditions.

### Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson

The work of Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson is a poetic exploration of cultural values. Their work addresses questions around faith, politics, national identity and the environment. Often built around pairings and oppositions their video and sculptural works create an encounter with the viewer that focuses on the complexity of objects and actions in relation to their social contexts. Works like *The Fireworks*, *The Carriers' Prayer* or *The Four Horsemen* operate through an unravelling of the social and ideological consequences of an action in regard to its apparent spectacle. This interest in consequence is reflected in the aesthetics of spectacle and excess that sit at the heart of their practice. In this sense the visual and aural intensity of much of their work can be seen as the discursive opening in its conversation with the viewer.

Ceri Hand Gallery Ltd  
12 Cotton Street  
Liverpool L3 7DY

T: +44 (0)151 207 0899  
E: info@cerihand.co.uk  
www.cerihand.co.uk



### **Matthew Houlding**

Houlding's recent sculptures and collages are an homage to the utopian zeal of modern architecture and Hockney's Bigger Splash painting. Drawing on Structuralist and Formalist ideas of architectural design and the relationships between intersecting materials and planes, contrasting geometry is framed by bold, primary coloured Perspex, which casts a Californian sunny glow over split level condo-like exteriors and interiors. This juxtaposition of materials - from cardboard boxes to garden fencing and kitchen work tops - suggest human prescience and endeavour, reflecting the experience of architecture and space; hierarchy, opposition, separation, connection, transition and assimilation. The composition of colours and painted surfaces define figure/ground relationships within the work and convey materiality, physical and cultural context, symbolism and emotional response. Houlding's landscapes are, however, people free, yet suggest an inherent optimism and sublime future.

### **Rebecca Lennon**

Rebecca Lennon combines video, performance, sound and installation in an ongoing process of montage, reconstruction, displacement, intervention and reinterpretation. Relating the seemingly unrelated and drawing from the everyday, illogical and discarded things that often slip out of the landscape unnoticed, Lennon is interested in communication and by extension miscommunication - what is passed on, shared, exchanged - what is broken down, changed, lost. Dealing primarily with the search for meaning and synchronicity via (seemingly) illogical or irrational means, Lennon juxtaposes readily available materials with alien scenario's to create montage spaces and ritualistic constructions, drawing upon subjects as diverse as divided support groups for an urban underground tunnel, superstition, cargo cults and sleep-talking. Adopting a creative process as ritualistic as the subjects she draws from, narratives and systems are created and merged; combining the found with the personal, the individual with the social and the real with the invented.

### **Henny Acloque**

Henny Acloque's narrative paintings reference old masters such as Bosch, Bruegel and Dürer and explore the fragility of life. Layers of paint and reflective varnish create timeless, evanescent landscapes that encapsulate curious creatures and symbolic, recurring motifs drawn from memories and myths, such as trees, animals, plants, eggs and arches. The majority of paintings are seductively small, which heightens the sinister frisson in the work and spectral space within all of the paintings provides a contemplative portal for considering self in relation to other. Archways with talons or medusa-esque vines brandishing a decapitated bird's head go further to belie the initial desire the paintings evoke in the viewer. Titles such as St. Paula (the patron saint of Widows) confirm that death is an ever present companion in her paintings. Well mined historical iconography - smoking candles, smiling skulls - undermine these eccentric worlds, where paradise is in the balance.

### **S Mark Gubb**

S Mark Gubb works across a range of media incorporating sculpture, video, sound, installation and performance. The subjects for his work are drawn from the social and political culture he grew up in; an equal fascination with things he finds so great and so terrible about the world we live in. This often takes the form of a re-evaluation and re-interpretation of contemporary culture and history, placing the seemingly familiar in relation with the incompatible, to provoke us to consider our contribution to the world we live in. Often working with the triptych and drawing on music and religious forms of communication Gubb suggests a wider discourse around history, culture and belief systems, inviting us to reflect on our moral codes and desire and ability to impact upon and change the world we inhabit.



### **Mel Brimfield**

Mel Brimfield's complex practice takes a skewed and tangled romp through the already vexed historiography of performance art, simultaneously revealing and inventing a rich history of collaboration between artists, dancers, theatre makers, political activists and comedians. Meticulously drawn and painted posters and programmes for fictional interdisciplinary cabarets, together with costumes and props, are produced alongside documentary-style films and live works that playfully associate performance art with most significant cultural developments of the last 100 years. Low-end showbiz memoirs, sensationalist biographical documentaries and cheap-to-make TV clip programmes compiling lists of 'The 100 Top/Best/Greatest...' are referenced in the work alongside formal museological displays of performance ephemera and documentation. The second hand anecdotes and mythologies surrounding performers and their performances are expanded, distorted and completely supplanted by new fictions, with archival photographs and footage, and authentic ephemera being appropriated and re-contextualised, or entirely invented at will.

### **Mimei Thompson**

Thompson's work is an intuitive investigation, through painting and drawing, into organic systems and the fluid, precarious and permeable nature of consciousness, emotion and personality. The spaces and forms pictured reflect states such as longing, melancholy, desire, alienation, anxiety, cruelty, authority, hope and hilarity, often in combination. Underlying the work is a sense of animism, and a search for identity, origins, and the connections between things. Energy and matter continually move from one state into another - the spark of life from the primordial swamp, the indifference, pain and absurdity of mortality, the certainty of decay, and new forms born from mutation. Key to the work is also an aspiration to set up a democracy (or perhaps a on-going tug of war) between the high and the low: childishness and refinement, beauty and ugliness, the ornate and the grotesque. Humour is coupled with a dark psychological aspect and an enjoyment of the sublime and the ridiculous, the frightening and the funny.

### **Jen Liu**

Jen Liu's paintings on paper, videos and installations draw on diverse histories to construct fictions that connect with and interrogate contemporary society. For each inter-related series Liu develops texts that begin with a single line of enquiry, such as *the environment gets worse*, which metamorphosis into giant, abstract, dazzlingly seductive watercolours, shot through with sampling, salvaging and recycling from modernism to constructivism. In association with these she devises and produces all aspects of her films (rarely featuring dialogue), resulting in dream-like non-linear narratives with fantastical props and costumes, infused with a delicious reverie of music and the absurd, but which always retain a melancholia that subverts and enhances our observations in the work and the worlds we inhabit. She is currently developing a timeline of geometric abstraction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, exploring a fictional near-future of environmental degradation, in which *there is nothing good to look at anymore*.