

Tuesday 30 August 2011

OPEN EYE GALLERY

LIVERPOOL'S OPEN EYE GALLERY RE-LAUNCHES 5 NOVEMBER 2011

**First UK Solo Show by Mitch Epstein plus work by Chris
Steele-Perkins and new commission by S Mark Gubb**



www.openeye.org.uk

Open Eye Gallery is delighted to announce the opening of its brand new gallery space in Liverpool on 5 November 2011, presenting work by world-class photographers Mitch Epstein and Chris Steele-Perkins for its programme of inaugural exhibitions.

Open Eye Gallery has been one of the UK's leading photography spaces since 1977, and is the only gallery dedicated to photography in the North West of England. 2011 represents an exciting milestone in the history of the gallery as it moves to a brand new purpose-built home, twice the size of its former incarnation.

Located in a development on Liverpool's Waterfront, the new gallery is a stone's throw from Tate Liverpool and the Albert Dock, in the heart of the city's rich cultural quarter.

Its re-launch this November reinforces **Open Eye's** position as one of the most significant exhibitors and collectors of photography in the UK.

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The new gallery is a bespoke space developed by Open Eye director Patrick Henry with architects RCKa and comprises **three areas for exhibitions:**

The main exhibition galleries on the ground floor will showcase an international programme of cutting-edge contemporary photography, opening with award-winning, New York based photographer **Mitch Epstein's** acclaimed ***American Power*** series. Awarded the prestigious 2011 Prix Pictet photographic award, the body of work reflects on energy production, power politics and the American Dream gone awry.

The first floor of the gallery will house a series of exhibitions drawn from the richness of the gallery's archives, launching with Magnum photographer **Chris Steele-Perkins' *The Pleasure Principle***, while the gallery's exterior wall will be used for large-scale 'Wall Work' commissioned pieces, the first being a striking new artwork by **S Mark Gubb**.

Further highlights from the opening year's programme include ***Richard and Famous*** in January 2012: An exploration of celebrity and fandom curated by the highly influential photographer **Martin Parr** featuring work by Australian photographer **Richard Simpin** and LA-based **Simone Lueck**.

Sarah Maxfield, Director: North West, Arts Council England said: "The Arts Council is delighted to support the opening of the new gallery space in such a high profile location. It strengthens ever further Liverpool's claim to have the strongest visual arts sector of any English city outside the Capital. Open Eye Gallery has secured a place as one of the National Portfolio organisations for the Arts Council to 2015, bringing great art to audiences and plays a key role in the national network of photography centres."

**MAIN EXHIBITION: Mitch Epstein; *American Power*
5 November to 23 December 2011**

American Power at Open Eye Gallery is the American photographer Mitch Epstein's first solo show in the UK. Epstein was awarded the prestigious 2011 Prix Pictet photographic award for this body of work, which examines how energy is produced and used in the American landscape, questioning the power of nature, government and corporations. A reflection on the American Dream gone awry, the show has its genesis in a small town in Ohio, which Epstein documented in 2003 after compulsory land purchase by the American Electric Power company. He went on to photograph 25 US states over six years, with the results forming a searing depiction of the effects of mass consumption.

**ARCHIVE EXHIBITION: Chris Steele-Perkins; *The Pleasure Principle*
5 November to 23 December 2011**

The Pleasure Principle is a powerful and searching photographic portrait of England in the 1980s. Chris Steele-Perkins records the rapidly changing social landscape that he found after returning from extensive travels in the third world. Using ideas of pleasure he explores public rituals that cut across class and location. The result is familiar yet disturbing. Steele-Perkins also explores his complex relationship with the country he'd grown up in but had never fully felt part of. His father was English, a military officer who abandoned his Burmese mother and brought him back to England at an early age. Chris Steele-Perkins said: "England is a strange place - funny, complex and sad. Distance yourself from it, experience other cultures, then look again. That strangeness becomes almost overwhelming." The exhibition marks the new acquisition of works from *The Pleasure Principle* for Open Eye's Archive, which contains more than 1,600 prints by celebrated photographers such as Tom Wood, Martin Parr and Edith Tudor-Hart.'

**WALL WORK: S Mark Gubb
5 November 2011 to 23 December 2011**

The first in a series of striking new commissions for the exterior façade of Open Eye Gallery. Gubb's design incorporates dazzle camouflage, historically used as a paint scheme for warships to confuse the enemy. Consisting of a complex pattern of geometric shapes in contrasting colours, this technique made it difficult for the enemy to estimate the size, speed and direction the ships were travelling, preventing them from getting a 'perfect shot'. Over the top of the dazzle camouflage, Gubb has overlaid the last words of revolutionary American poet, natural scientist and historian Henry David Thoreau: "Now comes good sailing..."

Notes to Editors:

Open Eye Gallery

19 Mann Island, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool L3 1BP

www.openeye.org.uk

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Press view: Thursday 3 November, 1 to 4 pm
Private view: Friday 4 November, 6 – 8pm
Gallery opens to the public Saturday 5 November, 10.30am

Gallery opening times: 10.30am to 5.30pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Closed Monday. **FREE ENTRY**

Image credits, clockwise from top:

- BP Carson Refinery, California 2007 ©Mitch Epstein. Courtesy Thomas Zander Galerie, Cologne
- Open Eye's Director Patrick Henry in front of Mann Island development, where new Open Eye Gallery is based, August 2011 © Mark McNulty
- Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and admirers at Conservative Party Conference. From *The Pleasure Principle*, 1989 © Chris Steele-Perkins. Courtesy Magnum Photos, London.

Mitch Epstein is represented by Thomas Zander Galerie in Cologne.
Chris Steele-Perkins is represented by Magnum Photos, London.
S Mark Gubb is represented by Ceri Hand Gallery, Liverpool.

Funding

Open Eye Gallery receives regular funding from Arts Council England and Liverpool City Council. The capital project has received generous support from several major funders along with grants from trusts and foundations, corporate support and individual donations. Major funders include Liverpool Vision/ Northwest Development Agency and the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Support has also been received from the Foyle Foundation, Rootstein Hopkins Foundation, Granada Foundation and JSF Pollitzer Charitable Settlement.

Project team

Architects: RCKa
Main Contractors: Braithwaites
Capital Project Partner: Countryside/Neptune Developments

Open Eye curatorial team

Patrick Henry, Director
Patrick has been Director of Open Eye since 2004. Before that he was Curator of Exhibitions at the National Media Museum (Bradford) and for six years prior to that he was a freelance photographer. He studied History of Art (BA) and Cultural History (MA) at the University of Manchester and has written numerous catalogue essays and contributed to publications such as *The Art Newspaper*, *Portfolio* and *Archive*. He was a member of the Liverpool Biennial curatorial team from 2004 to 2010 and is a board member of Mercy (Creative Agency, Liverpool/London) and LOOK (International photography festival, Liverpool).

Karen Newman, Curator

Karen has been Curator at Open Eye since October 2010. Prior to that she was Curator at FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology). With a background in supporting artists' production development and a specialism in lens-based media, she has commissioned major artworks by international artists such as Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Carolee Schneemann and Mark Lewis. Karen curated *Persistence of Vision*, a group show exploring the interplay of vision, memory and media with Danish co-curator Andreas Broegger in 2010 and has contributed to various publications including *100 Video Artists* (EXIT Press), *Apichatpong Weerasethakul* (Austrian Film Museum) and *We are the Real Time Experiment* (FACT).

For further press information, images, interview requests please contact:

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Open Eye's Capital Project is supported by:

