

OPEN EYE GALLERY



Ugo Mulas, *Venezia, 1968. Proteste studentesche, XXXIV Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*,
"Photo Ugo Mulas © Ugo Mulas Heirs. All rights reserved," courtesy camera16 contemporary art

Not All Documents Are Records. Photographing Exhibitions as an Art Form

EXHIBITION PERIOD: 5 July - 19 October 2014

PRIVATE VIEW: 4 July 2014

PREVIEW FOR ACCREDITED PRESS AND PROFESSIONALS: 3-4 July 2014

www.openeye.org.uk

Not All Documents Are Records represents Open Eye Gallery's contribution to the **Liverpool Biennial 2014**. The exhibition, curated by **Lorenzo Fusi**, looks at three key international visual art platforms through the lens of photography, moving between the past and future. The main theoretical question underpinning the project is: "Can photography be the site where the history of an exhibition is produced, and yet retain its artistic independent autonomy thus overcoming pure documentation?"

The exhibition starts its journey from two of the most important art events in the world: **documenta** in Kassel, a quinquennial (formerly quadrennial) survey of modern and contemporary art, established in 1955 by Arnold Bode as a means for reconnecting Germany with the most recent developments in the arts (after the war period culturally dominated by the Nazi obscurantism and censorship); and the

prestigious **Venice Biennale**, the oldest exhibition of its kind, founded in 1895. These forums greatly contributed to and informed the so-called 'biennial model', a type of art exhibition, international in relevance and ambition, that unfolds and manifests periodically with the aim of 'photographing' the status of the arts at a specific moment in time and anticipating the trends of the future. It is in this model that the Liverpool Biennial originates.

The show introduces the viewer to this format by presenting two seminal photographic series – **Hans Haacke's** 1959 photographs of documenta 2 and **Ugo Mulas' images** of 1968 Venice Biennale.

Haacke was still an art student in Kassel at the time and worked on the installation of the exhibition. After the opening of the show, on his own initiative, he took on the task of visually 'documenting documenta'. The resulting 26 black and white images offer unique insight on the event. By looking at the dialogue that the selected artworks set up with the space, the way they are displayed and interact with the audiences, Haacke's images speak not only about art per se, but comment on society as well as on the politics and power relations established by the actual exhibition. These photos have been rarely seen in the UK and represent, in Haacke's view, one of his earliest accomplished artworks.

Similarly, Mulas started his career as a photographer by taking pictures of another important art platform. His first professional assignment was a photo-reportage of the 1954 Venice Biennale, an event that he went on photographing until 1972. It is consequently little surprising that today Ugo Mulas is mostly known for his intense portraits of artists. Open Eye hosts the UK premiere of the photos he took during the 1968 Venice Biennale (the 'biennale of the revolution'). The selection on show is held in a private collection and has been curated by Mariachiara Di Trapani. The images document artists demonstrating against the establishment represented by the Venice Biennale (the "policed" and "militarised Biennale of the bourgeoisie", as the banners held in protest read) and poetically illustrate this intense period of political turmoil and social uprising.

As the preparations for the UK Biennial are underway, **Cristina De Middel** reinterprets the history of the Liverpool Biennial and imagines its possible future developments by means of a new commission. Spanish-born and London-based De Middel is well known for challenging photography as a medium by questioning the 'truth' and 'veracity' expressed by images. She came to prominence with the series *The Afronauts*, a fictional account of the 1964 Zambian space programme that, due to the lack of funding, never came to its full realisation (the artist herself has never been to Zambia).

Likewise, another Spanish artist, **Ira Lombardía**, infiltrated the legacy of the most recent documenta, held in Kassel under the artistic directorship of Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and unfolded over the summer of 2012. After a visit to this exhibition, Lombardía included a fictional artist in their exhibition catalogue whose work was created by chance. During the time she spent in Kassel, the artist experienced an 'epiphany', the sudden manifestation of an artwork purely created by light inside the Fridericianum (the exhibition's main venue). The piece on show at Open Eye follows the artist's philological, yet entirely fictional, playful recreation of the history behind such a metaphysical and unexpected manifestation.

Wall Work Commission

Paul Morrison

As part of the Cultural Programme of the **International Festival for Business 2014**, Open Eye has commissioned Liverpool-born artist **Paul Morrison** (b. 1966) with a new work that will transform the gallery's façade. Every two years, made to coincide with the Liverpool Biennial, the *Wall Work* series aims to create a new visual dialogue between the gallery and its context, and collaborate with artists who work outside the field of photography and lens-based practices.

Urformen is a cognitive landscape created from a selection of disparate found elements, which are taken from Morrison's archive. His source material ranges from archaic prints to contemporary graphics found in botanical text books, fine art, film stills and advertising.

The images are integrated through digital manipulation and form an indeterminate space that is simultaneously flat, yet gives the illusion of strong pictorial depth.

The resulting composition functions as a screen that allows the viewer to complete the landscape according to her/his perception, history, memory and cultural associations. It is a virtual site for an incident to occur in.

The contrasting black and white heightens the work's visual impact. However, the piece is somehow rich in associative colour. A picture of grass need not be green any more than the word rainbow needs to be written in multi-coloured letters.

Sponsored by the International Festival For Business 2014.

Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool, is one of the UK's leading photography spaces. Under the direction of Lorenzo Fusi, the gallery presents four main exhibitions per year and runs a rich programme of public events. Open Eye houses a collection of 1650 photographic prints in its Archive.

Robert Heinecken: Lessons in Posing Subjects

EXHIBITION PERIOD: 7 November 2014 – 11 January 2015

Curated by Devrim Bayar

Robert Heinecken (1931–2006) is today considered one of the most influential post-war American photographers. However, his work is still relatively unknown in Europe. The exhibition represents a unique opportunity for approaching the artist's complex and varied practice. This process rarely included the use of photographic apparatus, so much so that Heinecken described himself as a “para-photographer”. He was instead mostly interested in exploring the notion of photography as an expanded field of experimentation, often operating at the intersection of Pop and Conceptual Art.

The exhibition at Open Eye Gallery focuses on the Polaroids Heinecken took over a period of 30 years with a SX-70 camera. With well over 100 images on show, this presentation is one of the most comprehensive surveys of its kind to date and a UK premiere.

The exhibition is produced in partnership with Wiels (Brussels) and Fri Art : Centre d'art de Fribourg | Kunsthalle Freiburg. The exhibition will travel to Fri Art after the UK presentation.



WIELS

Metamorphosis of Japan After the War

EXHIBITION PERIOD: 22 January – 12 April 2015

Curated by Tsuguo Tada and Marc Feustel

In 1945, post-war Japan made a new start from the ashes of devastation. In the twenty years leading up to the Tokyo Olympics of 1964, it succeeded in undergoing a dramatic transformation, embarking on a path towards becoming an economic power.

These two decades constituted a period truly brimming with creative energy - a time in which democracy led to the restoration of vitality and free photographic expression, in which new talent pioneered post-war photography.

This new exhibition reflects on the turbulent period that followed the war, exhibiting over 100 black and white photographs by 11 leading post-war Japanese photographers, including **Yasuhiro Ishimoto, Shomei Tomatsu, Eikoh Hosoe** and **Ken Domon**. Rather than arranging the works by period and author, this exhibition is divided into three sections - "The Aftermath of the War," "Between Tradition and Modernity," and "Towards a New Japan."

Although the arrangement may seem arbitrary, the sequence provides a vivid narrative of the convoluted aspects of this complicated era.

The exhibition is organised by The Japan Foundation



Editors Notes:

If you need to contact us to ask a question, arrange interviews or to request hi-res image files, please email Emma Pettit emma@margaretlondon.com or Roz Arratoon roz@margaretlondon.com

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Gallery Opening Hours:

10.30am - 5.30pm

Tuesday to Sunday during exhibitions.

Closed on Mondays (except bank holidays) and during exhibition changeovers.

About Open Eye Gallery:

Founded in 1977 Open Eye Gallery is an independent not-for-profit photography gallery based in Liverpool. One of the UK's leading photography spaces, Open Eye is the only gallery dedicated to photography and related media in the North West of England. Open Eye has consistently championed photography as an art form that is relevant to everyone. It promotes the practice, enjoyment and understanding of photography by creating challenging and entertaining opportunities to experience and appreciate distinctive, innovative photographs.

As well as presenting a programme of international, high-quality exhibitions Open Eye houses a permanent Archive containing photographs dating from the 1930s to the present day.

In November 2011 Open Eye re-launched in a brand new purpose-built home in one of the city's most prestigious and prominent new developments on the Liverpool Waterfront. The gallery opens on to a large covered public square and is split over two floors. Open Eye Gallery hosts an international programme of cutting edge exhibitions showcased all year round, including periodic exhibitions reflecting on the gallery's Archive. Open Eye also commissions Wall Works - large-scale graphic art installations for the external facade of the gallery. The gallery's position at the heart of the regenerated Waterfront – next to the Museum of Liverpool and a stone's throw from Tate Liverpool and Albert Dock – cements its commitment to the city and its vibrant cultural life.

About Lorenzo Fusi, Director, Open Eye Gallery:

Lorenzo moved to Liverpool in 2009, when he was appointed as the International Curator of the Liverpool Biennial. He curated the 2010 and 2012 reiterations of the biennial exhibition. During this time, he became first involved with Open Eye Gallery as a result of the institutional collaborations and cultural partnerships that characterise the UK biennial from its inception. Prior to this appointment, Lorenzo was Chief Curator at Palazzo delle Papesse and sms contemporanea (Siena, Italy). Lorenzo took his post of Director at Open Eye Gallery in Spring 2013.

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Ugo Mulas, *Venezia, 1968. Proteste studentesche, XXXIV Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*,
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