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COLLYER BRISTOW GALLERY PRESENTS

URBAN FRAGMENT: imagining architecture.

Private View: Wednesday 26 May 2010, between 6 – 8.15pm

Exhibition continues on weekdays until 25 August 2010

**Sally Barker, Richard Cook, Charles Danby, Mark Harris, Steven Heffer,
Kathleen Herbert, Jost Münster, Simeon Nelson, Rob Olins, Clare Price,
Henry Seaton and Jane Ward**

The urban landscape is one of fragmented and diverse visions. Those of town planners, architects and engineers overlaid with the messy reality of human interaction and use. In this exhibition we look at the work of twelve artists whose work involves architectural subject matter or motifs. From the sculptural structures of Henry Seaton, to the fantastical 'Empire' of 'oozing site-specific creations' by artist Sally Barker; this exhibition covers the clean lines and blocks of Utopian dreams alongside the decorative, lyrical, fanciful and absurd. The exhibition considers how central, or otherwise, architecture is to each artist's practice and whether architectural language is a significant and necessary player in the creative process.

Sally Barker and Richard Cook overlay photographed 'real' landscape with architectural forms of their own devising. **Sally Barker** takes this imaginary empire building to extremes with her series *The Sally Barker Gallery* and *The Sally Barker Empire*. In these she creates maquettes and collages imposing her haphazard structures on to existing buildings such as Tate Modern, or building her own world or 'empire' for herself and friends. With humour she illustrates art and architecture as the ultimate expression of an egocentric yet visionary pursuit - the imprint of man on the world. **Richard Cook** works with photographic collage. He obliterates and blocks out elements of nature or buildings with blocks of colour creating both a void in the original image and a new structure. These constructed voids offer an overall implausibility that bring together space, weight and material in ways that seem happily accidental whilst quietly promoting an economy of means, re-use and transparency.

Whilst Cook offers a pared back vision of architectural space, **Mark Harris** overlays shapes into existing images of buildings and landscapes. Harris uses found images - old architectural pictures

from house clearances or charity shops. He reworks the images adding to structures with strange prisms, deadly spikes or intricate and other-worldly extensions. His overlaid images offer a multitude of references from HG Wells' 'War of the Worlds' to Constructivism to failed mega structures recalling Sixties Utopian projects. His series 'Continuous Defense', shown in Urban Fragment, also takes the form of three dimensional 'maps'. These are rendered into intricately assembled geometric shapes. The premise of using the entirety of a book, from bound cover through to annotated pages, underpins Harris's considerations of the ecological footprint inherent in the relationship between architecture and the world it inhabits.

Henry Seaton is a collaborative partnership of Rex Henry, artist and architect and artist Graham Seaton. For Urban Fragment they will present a large installation of objects both moulded with found materials or re-constituted from rejected waste. This collection of objects can be read in a multitude of ways from prototype cityscape to an arbitrary collection of waste. Each object invites individual scrutiny with its puzzling rendering between discarded waste and textural anomaly. As a whole, the work can be read as an architectural mapping or a strange arrangement of curiosities.



Henry Seaton, work in progress, 2010

Jane Ward's exploded fantastical cityscapes use fragmented images that she has photographed and manipulated. Images are repeated and built up using a computer programme, printed on to canvas and then reworked by the artist; scraping away and dissolving the ink to create majestic, floating cities. Colourful and alluring as these cities appear, a closer inspection often reveals the detritus of urbanisation - defunct advertising material, litter and industrial waste. Although Ward directly plays with images of buildings, her work seems to investigate the human impact on our environment.

Simeon Nelson explodes architecture in an entirely different way, creating architectural egressions that seep from the interiors of spaces. His 'open sculptural systems' visually break up the gallery space, seemingly emerging from beneath the white walls. This strange architectural plumbing seeks to explore the guts of architecture, hinting at the social and practical systems at work within a building. **Kathleen Herbert** is also interested in environments where systems exist and for Urban Fragment exhibits her *Nightwatcher* series. Here she has taken photographs under the cover of night walking the City of London, 'observing the observers'. Her images are of the security guards and nightwatchmen of office buildings once the buzzing industry of day is over.

Jost Münster & Charles Danby present a pared back look at architecture and structure, both using colour and simple planes. Charles Danby uses familiar industrial and commercial materials such as pink highlighter and cardboard, investigating the simplicity and materiality of that which surrounds us. Danby is concerned with the structures of conception, the evaluation of spatial relationships between objects and the flexibility of language. He folds card and paper and mixes gesture with drawing. Flashes of fluorescent colour hint at glam and pop culture. Painterly concerns underpin Jost Münster's plain structures and simple canvases that seem to reference the washed out demise of once shining architecture. The painted surfaces of his structures often seem to look to Hopper's gasoline stations and the faded colour and optimism of 50s America.

Conversely, **Clare Price**'s canvases are glaringly bright; a perilous mixture of intensely detailed systems and the wilder nuances of spray paint. Her influences range from Turner to the 1950s abstract expressionists, to street art. Whilst her large canvases begin as sketches on a basic computer programme, these pixellated lines are rendered delicately in pencil as lines passing and intersecting across the space and the distinctive references to rural landscapes become apparent. The planes created are then painted on with domestic or spray paints creating a juxtaposing composition of systems and mayhem, summarising the polarity between the urban and rural landscape. Price has returned to painting after leaving art college 15 years ago and a highly successful career in design and animation. The tension between design and the visceral qualities of dripping paint or using spray paint play out in her bright, bombastic paintings which take their titles from songs and lyrics.

Rob Olins has created a new work for Urban Fragment. Based on the urban grid of cities and using an architectural material that allows structures to move and bend, enabling much of the undulating architecture of today, Olins creates a subtle interplay between what the eye reads and what the mind imagines. Using materials synonymous with architecture and engineering, Olins hones a new, interdisciplinary language from them. Echoing a permanent commission for Romford and King George Hospital Redbridge (2006), Olins will create a new work specifically for

Collyer Bristow Gallery, suspending brightly coloured 'gridshells' from the ceiling of the gallery. The work gently floats around the existing pillar, playing on the nature of building material and the use of it within differing spaces, to different ends.

For some years **Steven Heffer** has concentrated on painting the urban landscape and riverscape in London and specifically the industrial buildings in and around the riverfront in Greenwich, South-East London. Heffer's training in the 90s at The Slade School of Fine Art consisted of a rigorous discipline of objective, observational painting, with emphasis on formal concerns. Whilst this still underpins his work, the language and the themes have become more personal and more abstract. Heffer conjures form and content from the interplay of subject matters, finding a harmony within the painting process and the dissolution of the environment that he observes. The river is a source of deep interest, tapping into this Londoner's recurring fascination with The Thames; the modern versus the timeless.

Covering real and imagined, conceptual and concrete, Urban Fragment examines a multitude of architectural and environmental visions.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The Collyer Bristow Gallery is a bespoke gallery space with a dynamic exhibition programme. Collyer Bristow LLP is a UK law firm with offices in London and Geneva. The firm provides business and personal legal advice to a wide range of clients both in the UK and internationally. Within the legal world Collyer Bristow has been championing emerging talent in contemporary art for the past fifteen years.

Urban Fragment is part of the London Festival of Architecture 2010:

The Festival will take place from 19 June to 4 July 2010, encompassing three weekends and two intervening weeks. Each weekend has a different geographic focus: the West End (Portland Place/ Regent Street), High Street 2012 (Whitechapel, Bow and Stratford in the East) and the Bankside Urban Forest (Southbank and Bankside Cultural Quarter). The Festival will incorporate complementary initiatives the International Architecture Student Festival, the International Architecture Showcase, Love Your Street, My City Too and Open Studios. Affiliated talks, installations, exhibitions, pavilions, walks, bike rides, performances and Big Breakfasts will take place throughout the Festival. The theme of the festival is *The Welcoming City*, a reference to the design of cities, which are amenable, tolerant and engaging, as well as to the Olympic slogan for 2012 that "London welcomes the world". Follow the London Festival of Architecture on Twitter to find out all the latest news: www.twitter.com/LFA2010

The London Festival of Architecture is produced collaboratively by London's leading architectural organisations—The Architecture Foundation (AF), New London Architecture (NLA) and the Royal Institute of British Architects London (RIBA)—in coordination with a broad range of cultural and professional partners. The Founding Director is Peter Murray and the Co-Directors are Sarah Ichioka (The Architecture Foundation), Nick McKeogh (Pipers Projects) and Tamsie Thomson (RIBA London).

London Festival of Architecture is sponsored by Arts Council England, Land Securities and London Development Agency. For more information and to register an event please visit www.lfa2010.org

Viewing is by appointment Monday to Friday during office hours

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