

DRAWING ROOM

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Signs of the City

8 April – 6 September 2013

Olivia Bax, Christopher Bond, Jack Brindley, Rob Chavasse, Marcus Cope, Freya Douglas-Morris, Benjamin Jenner

Curated by Drawing Room in collaboration with UBM plc

Signs of the City brings together the work of seven contemporary, emerging artists engaging with ideas of the city and urban environment. Through painting, drawing, sculpture and photography the exhibition explores the varied and diverse facets of city life.

Many of the works within the exhibition highlight the layered architectural scope and history of the city. The photographic works of **Jack Brindley** provide glimpses of structures and shapes that define our urban landscape. He is interested in how buildings, particularly those built with a utilitarian function, have evolved through time and have developed functions and value beyond what was initially intended. In his series *Toil (slow decay)*, Brindley documents details from concrete modernist buildings that have been commandeered by skateboarders. *Cowboy Casino* by **Rob Chavasse** documents a light installation by the artist at an abandoned petrol station in the town of Leicester. Whilst inevitably highlighting its derelict state, the work pays homage to a bygone era of modernist architecture and the increasing scarcity of such architectural flourishes in unexpected town and city locations. The sculptural works of **Olivia Bax** echo the shapes and textures of the city. Bax often utilises materials more commonly associated with the construction industry - wire, corrugated iron and plastic roofing panels – as a means of transferring marks and line onto surfaces, or from which she creates plaster casts. Bax's works are imbued with a vulnerability that contrasts with the apparent strength of these materials and the view of the big city as durable.

Other artists draw upon real places and existing structures or buildings to re-imagine the city. In *City Park*, a painting by **Freya Douglas-Morris**, a white tower block floats amongst an otherworldly landscape, bringing to mind Le Corbusier's modernist dream of vertical garden cities. Douglas-Morris's works are based on her personal experiences of both rural and urban landscapes encountered whilst travelling and artist residencies in Barcelona and Berlin. Borrowing elements from architecture, city structures and natural terrain, she creates dreamlike, hybrid landscapes that are more concerned with memory than the depiction of known places. In his paintings and works on paper **Benjamin Jenner** creates imagined worlds more aptly navigated by the mind than the body. Referencing existing structures, shapes and styles found within the urban environment, the cityscapes he creates are neither utopian nor dystopian, but exist as propositions – neutral frameworks where we can explore and dream.

Since the beginning of written history, the city – from Babylon, Sodom and Gomorrah to Rome - has been held responsible for the ills of society and depicted as a place of vice and corruption. The drawings of **Marcus Cope** reflect on the lure and trappings of the city and the desire for a simpler, slower life. In drawings such as *Buy Neon Cancer* and *Thicker*, Cope raises questions about modern urban living, its wider implications and the damage that it creates globally. Other works in the exhibition reflect on the deterioration of the cityscape in the current economic climate. The series of light-boxes by **Christopher Bond** comment on the impact of independent shops and restaurants that have been eclipsed by big superstores, chains and franchises. Constructed from re-claimed restaurant and shop signs, Bond's witty, phonetic statements utilise the iconic typefaces of the city.

LIST OF WORKS

Olivia Bax

Untitled (plaster samples), 2012

Plaster, paint, varnish, shelf

80 x 47 x 20 cm

Olivia Bax

Structure/drawing (portrait), 2013

Japanese paper, paper pulp, spray paint, varnish, perspex box

31 x 45 x 7.5 cm

Olivia Bax

Structure/drawing (landscape), 2013

Japanese paper, paper pulp, car spray paint, perspex box

40.5 x 30.5 x 7.5 cm

Christopher Bond

Eek, 2009

Reclaimed shop front signage, wood, tape, fluorescent lighting

54 x 26.5 x 9.5 cm

Christopher Bond

Erm, 2010

Reclaimed shop front signage, wood, fluorescent lighting

117 x 45 x 26 cm

Christopher Bond

Closed, 2010

Reclaimed shop front signage, wood, spray paint, fluorescent lighting

71.5 x 26.5 x 14.5 cm

Jack Brindley

A series of three unique works: Toil (slow decay), 2013

C-type print, frame, black emulsion paint

60 x 70 cm

Jack Brindley

Building, Dwelling and Thinking,
Clay, found publications
Dimensions variable

Rob Chavasse

Cowboy Casino, 2013
Edition of 3 + 2APs
C-type print on card
62 x 39 cm

Marcus Cope

Buy Neon Cancer, 2012/2013
Oil paint, oil pastel, charcoal, pencil, found paper, plywood
72 x 52 cm

Marcus Cope

Thicker, 2012/2013
Oil paint, oil pastel and paper collage, found paper, plywood
72 x 52 cm

Marcus Cope

Sell, 2012/2013
Oil paint, oil pastel, found paper, plywood
72 x 52 cm

Marcus Cope

Paradise, 2012/2013
Oil paint, oil pastel, found paper, plywood
72 x 52 cm

Freya Douglas-Morris

City Park, 2011
Oil on board
21 x 26 cm

Freya Douglas-Morris

Berlin House, 2008

Oil on board

30 x 30 cm

Freya Douglas-Morris

At The Last, 2008

Oil on board

40 x 40 cm

Benjamin Jenner

From the series O, 2011

Pen, ink, graphite and pencil on gesso ground

63 x 42 cm

Benjamin Jenner

Untitled (without light), 2013

Pen, pencil, acrylic paint and graphite on paper

81 x 92 cm