

# WORKS|PROJECTS

## PRESS RELEASE

### MAGNUS QUAIFE

#### 1968 and Other Myths

5 May – 16 June 2012

In his first exhibition at WORKS|PROJECTS, Magnus Quaife debuts a significant new series of paintings made over more than 3 years entitled *1968 and Other Myths*.

The series considers the power of the image in relation to events or moments that have helped shape our cultural myths, the effects of which reverberate through our collective psyche even if they occurred decades before.

The series of meticulous watercolours began as the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of May 1968 approached. Familiar images from that year that had become the stuff of myth began to circulate in the print and broadcast media, and in every iteration of the internet, from local blogs to international news platforms.

In Paris, the rioting of May '68 was so intense and lasted so long that some of those caught up in it believed the country was close to revolution, as 80,000 students, teachers and workers marching through the French capital on La Contestation de Mai which escalated into a month long protest. This general insurrection is now considered by some as the single most important revolutionary event of the 20th century. Yet simultaneously it has become an artistic cliché, an easy signifier for a spirit of rebellion that for most has never been experienced.

For Quaife, painting the images that began circulating in the media provided a way of extracting these images from circulation, allowing a different kind of focus in time and a questioning of the image's status and location. Quaife's renditions of these more than second-hand images explores just how little can be done for the image to function – how slightness of application or the removal of detail can become metaphors for a slippage in meaning that only accelerates through the passage of time and cultural distance.

The works both describe and memorialise the iconic student protests, rock concerts, art performances and political rallies of the time, but combine these events with the seemingly insignificant, the forgotten and the dead-ends and

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mis-directions encountered through the vagaries of internet search engines. These images combine to create a new kind of history painting - one that investigates the separation of images from their meaning and through its very construction questions the gap between our familiarity with the media and our understanding of history.

## About Magnus Quaife

Magnus Quaife was born in 1975 and gained a BA Fine Art Painting from Chelsea School of Art and Design in 1997 & MFA from Manchester Metropolitan University in 2001.

Recent exhibitions include:

*The Cooperative*, Liverpool Biennial; *As long as the pain lasted*, The International Three, Manchester; *A Theater to Address*, Arnolfini, Bristol; *Unrealised Potential*, Cornerhouse, Manchester; *Abstract Cabinet* and *This is the Gallery and the Gallery is Many Things*, Eastside Projects, Birmingham; *Rotate*, Contemporary Art Society, London; *openended*, Rhys and Hannah Presents, Bristol; *Let me tell you a story*, Porta 33, Funchal, Portugal.

The artist has work in a number of significant private and corporate collections and in the UK and Europe.

## Notes to editors

Exhibition open 12-5pm, Thursday– Saturday, 5 May – 16 June 2012  
or by appointment. Admission free.

Preview Friday 4 May 2012, 6~8pm

The evening also sees the launch of new exhibitions at our neighbours Picture This (Jimmy Robert) and Spike Island (Spike Island Open) and also at Arnolfini (Superpower: Africa in Science Fiction). The galleries will host a joint party at Spike Island from 9pm till late.

## About WORKS|PROJECTS

WORKS|PROJECTS works with a small stable of distinctive British artists and is located on Sydney Row in Bristol's historic harbour side, which has steadily developed into the centre for visual arts in the city. The gallery is located on the same block as both Spike Island and Picture This and is only 10 minutes walk from Arnolfini. The gallery is directed by curator Simon Morrissey.

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