

MK Gallery

News Release



How to Construct a Time Machine

23 January – 22 March 2015
Admission free

Preview

22 January 2015 / 6-10pm / Free*

Artists In Conversation

22 January 2015 / 7pm / Free*

Mark Wallinger and Ruth Ewan

In Conversation with Dr Marquard Smith

*Online pre- booking required

What is time? How do we order the past, the present, and the future? Why are artists interested in time? How is art a machine, vehicle, or device for exploring time? How is art a means by which time 'travels', and how does art permit us to travel in time? These and other questions provide the rationale for *How to Construct a Time Machine*, an exhibition presented at MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, of over twenty-five historical and contemporary works that explore how artists transform our experience of time, curated by Dr Marquard Smith of the Royal College of Art, London.

The exhibition's title is taken from an 1899 text by the avant-garde French writer, Alfred Jarry, written in direct response to H. G. Wells' science fiction novel *The Time Machine* (1895). Wells invented and popularised a distinctively modern, fictional concept of time travel, with the time machine as a vehicle that could be operated 'selectively'. Jarry's response crafted a pseudo-scientific fiction that presents the time machine and time travel as an instance of 'the science of imaginary solutions'.

Taking this idea of the time machine, time travel, and perhaps even time itself as an instance of 'the science of imaginary solutions', the exhibition is divided thematically and includes works by John Cage, Martin John Callanan, Jim Campbell, Edgar Cleijne and Ellen Gallagher, Mat Collishaw, Ruth Ewan, Tehching Hsieh, On Kawara, the Lumière Brothers, Chris Marker, Kris Martin, Georges Méliès, Manfred Mohr, Melvin Moti, Nam June Paik, Katie Paterson, Elizabeth Price, Sun Ra, Raqs Media Collective, Meekyoung Shin, Maja Smrekar, The Otolith Group, Thomson & Craighead, Mark Wallinger and Catherine Yass.

Film work ranges from George Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), an iconic silent movie which follows a group of astronomers as they explore the moon, to Thomson & Craighead's *The Time Machine in alphabetical order* (2010), a complete rendition of the 1960s film version of the Wells' novella re-edited into alphabetical order.

Sculptural work includes Mark Wallinger's *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space* (2001), a polished stainless steel version of Dr Who's 'Tardis' police box that simultaneously disappears into the space-time continuum and reflects its own surroundings, and Ruth Ewan's *We Could Have Been Anything That We Wanted to Be* (2012), a decimal clock which divides the day into ten (rather than twenty-four) periods, echoing a bold 18th century French Republican attempt to redefine and rationalise the day.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue featuring an extended Introduction by the exhibition's guest curator Dr Marquard Smith, Head of Doctoral Studies/Research Leader in the School of Humanities at the Royal College of Art, London. It will also include a translation of Jarry's *How to Construct a Time Machine*, together with essays by Dutch cultural theorist and video artist Mieke Bal and radical philosopher Peter Osborne.

Notes to Editors

Preview and In Conversation

How to Construct a Time Machine

Thursday 22 January 2015 / Preview / 6pm – 10pm / All welcome / 7pm / In Conversation*
Exhibitors Mark Wallinger and Ruth Ewan with exhibition curator Dr Marquard Smith.

*Preview and Talk free but pre-booking is required via www.mkgallery.org

Dr Marquard Smith

Marq Smith is Research Leader and Head of Doctoral Studies in the School of Humanities at the Royal College of Art. He is also editor-in-chief of *Journal of Visual Culture*. More details at: <http://www.rca.ac.uk/more/staff/marquard-smith/>

MK Gallery

MK Gallery is one of the UK's leading public galleries, presenting a programme of international contemporary visual art, alongside a dynamic programme of film, performance and music and wide-ranging education and community projects. A major capital expansion is planned for 2017, the city's 50th anniversary, that will double the exhibition spaces, include three independent cinemas, dedicated education and community facilities and a new café. Details at www.mkgallery.org

Exhibition Supporters

Exhibition supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. With thanks to the Royal College of Art, London.



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Royal College of Art

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Press information

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Image overleaf: Ruth Ewan, *We Could Have Been Anything That We Wanted to Be* (2012) Ends /

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