

Marcus Coates

Workplace Gallery
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31st January–28th February 2009
Tues - Sat, 11am -5pm
(or by appointment)
Preview: Friday 30th January 6 – 9pm



The Plover's Wing

Workplace Gallery are delighted to present a solo exhibition of new work by Marcus Coates.

Filmed before the recent incursion into Gaza by Israel, ***The Plover's Wing*** sees Coates performing a shamanic ritual, descending in a trance to the 'lower world' to consult animal spirits on a question put to him by the Mayor of Holon, Israel regarding the Palestine/Israeli crisis. The subsequent discussion, drawn from Coates' interpretation of the responses that he has received from the animals that he has encountered, and applied to the question posed by the Mayor of Holon offers an insight into the wider conflict.

The work will be shown subsequently at ***Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009***

Since 2004 Marcus Coates has been developing an ongoing body of work in which he performs a shamanic ritual in front of a live audience. The performance begins with Coates interacting with the audience by asking them for a question (often relating to the context of the performance or in larger commissions this has often been negotiated prior to the event). Coates then takes that question with him into the spirit-world during a ritual in which he encounters, and where possible communicates with, animal spirits. Once he emerges from his trance he then discusses his experience with the audience in an attempt to use his visions as the basis for an interpretation of the answer to the initial question.

The ongoing series of performances and shamanic rituals have been made into films and photographs that recall the animal cults of pre-modern societies. Whether dressed as a stag at a gathering of the baffled tenants of a condemned Liverpool tower block or training amateur singers to mimic the dawn chorus, Coates' work reconsiders the spiritual roles of animals and nature in postmodern society. Through a combination of his earnestness as a Shaman, the absurdity of the Shamanic ritual in a contemporary setting, and his deadpan documentary style Coates inadvertently exposes the structures of society and calls into question the need for a reconnection with our origins.

Alongside ***The Plover's Wing*** is ***Indigenous British Mammals*** in which we see Coates buried in a self dug pit covered with turf as he performs an animal call karaoke of mammals indigenous to Britain, in some way a search for a source or core nationalistic identity. ***Peregrine*** is a stuffed Starling painted to mimic the plumage of a Peregrine falcon. ***Galapagos Fashion*** was made during a recent residency in the Galapagos Islands. Coates is posing next to the icons of the Islands, the Giant Tortoises. The work is a confusing marriage of fashion, glamour, exoticism and the marketing of conservation. In the attic ***Cadences***, a looped series of last chords from symphonies by romantic English composers, (Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Finz Holst...) These final notes combine to form a never ending piece of music.

The Plover's Wing was filmed in the context of: Hapzura; The Festival of Experimental Music and Sound Art, a project of the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon



List of Works

Ground Floor

The Plover's Wing

2009

(Filmed in the context of: Hapzura; The Festival of Experimental Music and Sound Art, A project of the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon.)

Single Channel Video

Duration 22:30 minutes

Indigenous British Mammals

2000

DV Single Screen Installation

Duration 06:10 minutes

Edition of 5 plus 1 artist's proof

This work was produced in association with Grizedale Arts.

First Floor

Peregrine Falcon

1999

Watercolour on Starling, Wood, Glass Display Case

37 x 24 x 19 cm

This work was produced in association with Grizedale Arts.

Galapagos Fashion

2008

Archival Inkjet Print

63.9 x 76.9 cm (Framed)

Edition of 10 plus 1 artist's proof

This work was produced in association with the Galapagos Conservation Trust and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Second Floor

Cadences

2008

Audio

Duration 14:06 minutes (looped)

Edition of 10 plus 1 artist's proof