



been purloined by Dean from pop songs, though they sound eerie and strange away from their original context.

*LoveLoveLove* is an early demonstration of Dean's knack of appropriating existing imagery and blending it with unexpected music or other film footage to create new works entirely separate from the origins of their component parts. These pieces are far removed from the largely humour-based mash-ups of film imagery that litter the internet, and are different too from the works of Douglas Gordon and Christian Marclay, who are also renowned for their manipulation of found imagery. The history and narratives of the original works form layers within Dean's art pieces, but then take on a new significance or energy that is often personal to the artist.

The effect can be seen in another new piece at Beaconsfield, which combines footage of Sid Vicious with a soundtrack by Syd Barrett. Vicious is sitting slumped with his eyes closed while Barrett sings the song *Two of a Kind*, which features the refrain 'open your eyes and don't be blind, can't you see we're two of a kind'. The light, hopeful tone of the song is diminished by knowledge of the musicians' tragic outcomes and the work seems a counterpoint to an earlier piece by Dean, which features footage of Tippi Hedren returning to consciousness in the Alfred Hitchcock film *The Birds* while being serenaded by 1960s band The Byrds.

Dean was recently ordained as a Church of England minister, and religious imagery and ideas have run through his work since the mid 1990s. As Dan Graham observed in his film work *Rock My Religion*, 1982-84, the urgency of religious feeling can often be found in music, or in art, and it is tempting to assume that Dean sees a unity between his religion and his art. In the exhibition notes, though, Dean explicitly rejects this, stating that, for him, religion and contemporary art adopt different languages. And it indeed seems uncomfortable to describe his work as 'religious art', for while the theme is certainly present, it isn't overwhelming or in any way evangelical. Instead, religion seems but one aspect of Dean's work, albeit a dominant one, and part of a larger philosophical exploration that also draws fragments from music and film in the creation of ambiguous, poetic works. ■

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## Carey Young: Memento Park

Eastside Projects Birmingham

27 November to 29 January

'Memento Park' is a touring show surveying a decade of Carey Young's practice and presenting an eponymous new video work, shot in a 'statue park' near Budapest. The well-chosen pieces represent the central themes from a period that has seen Young establish herself among the most acute artistic commentators upon the mores of late capitalism and the 'society of the secretariat'. At the heart of that concern has been firstly capital's reification of certain of the tropes of modernist art and its utopian historical aspirations, and secondly the question of performance – not in terms of measurable output but rather the performance of identity. What was, perhaps, most compelling about Young's early work was the degree to which it reflected the commoditisation of subjectivity through the harnessing of speech and gesture.

Where once those characteristics had marked the supposedly autonomous human subject of western culture in the public sphere, now the figuring of the self that speech and gesture enacted is yoked to the projects of capital. The western public sphere exists now principally as a market place, and its novel, 'free' formulations are either already the calculated contrivances of capital or else quickly colonised by new forms of marketing. The truly intractable sites of discourse, such as WikiLeaks, may simply be isolated by financial and legal technicalities. Young provided an index for politicians' conscious manipulation of the language of politics and capital's invasion of the everyday. But what she most closely addressed was the metamorphosis of quotidian language into discourses of



Mark Dean  
*Love Missile (7" vs. 12")*  
2010  
video still

Carey Young  
*Cautionary Statement*  
2007

exception articulated in the exercise of power – something made brutally clear in *Uncertain Contract*, 2008, which reduces words to corporeal and vocal elements, without content in themselves, and only granted meaning by rhetorical devices.

What *I Am a Revolutionary*, 2001, told us was that the subject's declaration to history of its imagined historical capacity was now stripped of both purpose and romance. To be a revolutionary in 2001 was not to risk sudden death at the barricades but perhaps to introduce to the market a new flavour of carbonated, caffeinated drink. After all, enterprises selling intangibles had become the new Avant Garde: to be a revolutionary was not to interrupt history but to temporarily tip the balance between brands. The more recent *Product Recall*, 2007, spoke eloquently of a world in which even the constituent cells of its beings were copyrighted, stamped with the legally protected marks of global corporations, and where often the marketing signs of those corporations were what once had been proclamations for human freedom or the 'liberty' of nature. However, in her 'interrogation' in that work, reclining on an analyst's couch, Young's inability to link slogan to brand amounted to a kind of resistance, a kind of *parole in libertà*, achieved not through agency – Modernism's project for a liberated language – but elision.

The investment in what Hal Foster termed the 'topos of failure' as site of historical redemption has been a dominant characteristic of recent radical thought. We can trace a legacy to Michel Foucault's faith in the criminal, the insane and even the dead. But through Judith Butler's and Leo Bersani's work, and especially that of Giorgio Agamben, there has been an affirmation of incapacity as 'resistance' – whether it is the infelicitous performance of the dominant script of sexual identity or the inability to speak the master's language, and thus occupy a space beyond the law. That she addresses these subjects is a mark of Young's real importance to our recent history. Unfortunately, at the heart of hope is an occultation of the subject that draws on Romanticism and – in the wake of Walter Benjamin, the grand-daddy of pathetic difference – Messianism. In some of Young's recent work a hermetic utopianism contaminates once healthy cynicism. Typical of this is *Obsidian Contract*, 2010, where a document proposing the exhibition space as public domain is visible only through its reflection in the magician's blackened mirror. What we get is a beautiful, artificial permission; it is not even the temporary licence of carnival. One wonders what the consequences would be for the exhibition space, and the subject who chose to perform the encouraged liberty. The radicalism of such work is at once spurious and typical of contemporary practice. One worries yet more, looking at *Memento Park* itself, at the monoliths of a utopianism that went badly wrong. The modernist era constitutes, in a way, our classical past; we wander in its ruins. But to understand that past and its dreams we need something more than nostalgia and curiosity, which seem to be the filters through which it is seen in Young's film. We need now, perhaps, the acute historian rather than the imaginative artist. ■

**Memento Park** travels to Cornerhouse, Manchester, 5 February to 20 March and mima, Middlesbrough, 31 March to 10 July.

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## On Becoming a Gallery: Part Three

Angus-Hughes London

15 January to 6 February

A long time ago, Kurt Vonnegut wrote an essay about literary tastes among US college students entitled 'Why They Read Hesse'. A similar analysis could surely be undertaken for citizens of the art world, under the title 'Why They Read Deleuze'. Some thinkers, like Jean Baudrillard, enjoy a brief moment in the art world's sun; others, like Samuel Beckett, become perennials. Gilles Deleuze is proving to be one of the latter – surely because his theorising, which has proved applicable to political strategising as well as to art and music, anticipated cultural shifts that are still unfolding. On the evidence of this show, his name can also be invoked to add intellectual lustre to, say, the practical business of inaugurating a gallery.

Prior to its opening last October, this fledgling East End space invited the curators of Fieldgate Gallery – nomadic thinkers since their Whitechapel venue was lost to developers – to curate its opening trio of shows, collectively titled 'On Becoming a Gallery'. Following a solo by Ron Haselden and a double-header by Frances Richardson and Gary Colclough, the final part doubles up again – as if the exhibition were a repeatedly dividing cell – to feature four artistic practices: those of Aisling Hedgecock, Stewart Gough and Tom Ormond, Nooshin Farhid and Paul Eachus. 'There is no theme, no critical context, no text. It is about filling a space full of stuff over a three-exhibition period and giving it significance', state the curators in the handout. This feels both candid and questionable, given that two paragraphs earlier they had established a significance-giving critical context by mentioning Deleuze, glossing his notion of becoming – 'not linear, but a simultaneous realisation of the constituent parts in the becoming of its nature. It is a perception not a process' – and going on to quote him. Maybe Deleuze's influence has become so pervasive as to go beyond being a specific critical context; maybe his thought, now, is simply the very air we breathe.

The works themselves speak to this processual temperament, locating us repeatedly *in medias res* amid admixtures of detail and ambiguity. Farhid's constellation of monitors, *16 Hours*, 2008, features a transcribed dialogue recounting the evacuation of a burning building – operatives (firefighters?) reporting back to 'security command centre'; a computer-generated grid which morphs restlessly into new topographies of peaks and valleys; a changeable cloud of tiny lights, of ambiguous scale; and a perpetual aerial scanning over landscape, turning it smoothly synthetic. Surveillance, here, seems both a boon and an abstract threat. More of Farhid's monitors, again featuring security footage, infest Eachus's *Trans Chaosmos Facility*, 2009-10, a complexly articulated, walk-in polyhedron made from plywood and strung with a tangle of brightly coloured cable emerging ominously from plastic bottles sporting cardboard cuffs. This could be the hideout of a geometry-obsessed terrorist, a scientist's lair, or a bit of modular aesthetics: the import hangs pointedly unresolved, and one is aware that Farhid's interpolated films – of crumpled paper raining endlessly down a stairwell, of individuals and groups at a demonstration, faces caught in crosshairs – may be operating as red herrings.