

## John Hansard Gallery

University of Southampton  
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### Free Admission

Open Tuesday to Friday 11 – 5  
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[www.hansardgallery.org.uk](http://www.hansardgallery.org.uk)

### About us

**John Hansard Gallery** is a world-leading centre for contemporary art. Launched in 1980, the Gallery showcases innovative work by UK and international artists through exhibitions, off-site projects, research, publications, education and outreach programmes. Bringing artists and communities together, the Gallery makes a vital contribution to the cultural life of the city and region and encourages new practice by today's best artists and curators.

In 2016, the John Hansard Gallery will move to a new city centre location as part of Southampton's new arts complex, a VIP Project for the city supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, led by Southampton City Council in partnership with Grosvenor Developments Ltd.

**John Hansard Gallery** is part of the **University of Southampton** and supported by **Arts Council England**.

### Press images and further information:

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## PRESS RELEASE

# Eyes For Blowing Up Bridges: Joining the dots from the Situationist International to Malcolm McLaren

26 September – 14 November 2015

From Situationism to Beat to Punk, *Eyes For Blowing Up Bridges* unites a group of remarkable radical artists, poets, writers and activists who initiated, perpetrated and influenced a range of seminal post-war alternative movements.

Presenting rarely exhibited material – including cut-ups, paintings, film, video and sound, as well as self-published books, pamphlets, anarchist propaganda, punk ephemera and graphics – the exhibition examines the creative interplay between William Burroughs, Guy Debord, Asger Jorn, Alexander Trocchi and King Mob, and their collective influence on Malcolm McLaren in his endeavours to disrupt the cultural and social status quo from the 1960s to his premature death in 2010.

Malcolm McLaren co-opted the intellectual vigour of this powerful and difficult group of individuals to make insurrectionary statements during his days as a Situationist art student in the 1960s, and in his fashion forays with Vivienne Westwood in the 1970s and 1980s.

Having repudiated painting as a bourgeois form of expression like Jorn before him, McLaren's work with Westwood and the Sex Pistols was inspired by such Situationist techniques as *détournement* (the juxtaposition of pre-existing elements), Burroughs' 'cut-ups', and Debord's emphasis on the staging of situations "that bring a revolutionary reordering of life, politics and art". *Eyes For Blowing Up Bridges* will present the so-called "defiguration" paintings exhibited by Jorn in the early 1960s, alongside the detoured comic strips of the Situationist International's literature and Debord's cinematic masterpiece, *The Society Of The Spectacle*.

McLaren resurrected slogans associated with radical group King Mob, and their commentary on the banalisation of everyday life by the consumer society in the late 1960s. He also lifted text from the porn novels Alexander Trocchi wrote for the Olympia Press in the preceding decade. Original volumes of the revolutionary group's *King Mob Echo* will be on display at the exhibition, which will also highlight the links between Trocchi's book *Helen And Desire* and McLaren's t-shirts design entitled 'I Groaned With Pain'.

In the 1980s McLaren continued to apply radical art theories to his popular music excursions with Adam Ant, Boy George, Bow Wow Wow and the artist and anarchist Jamie Reid, as well as to his own musical collages, including the multi-million selling world travelogue album *Duck Rock* and the lounge-pop LP *Paris*, which contains echoes of the psychogeographic maps of the city Debord created in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Strands of the work of these troublemakers may also be detected in McLaren's investigations into film – such as the Pistols biopic *The Great Rock N Roll Swindle* and his position as ideas guru to the likes of Steven Spielberg in Hollywood in the 1980s – as well as into advertising, media and even politics, with McLaren's candidacy for Mayor of London in the late 1990s.

In his final years, McLaren paid tribute to Debord et al with the film installations *Shallow 1-21* and *Paris, Capital of the XXIst Century*. Both of these are exhibited as part of *Eyes For Blowing Up Bridges*, which also features the first UK public display of McLaren's student paintings from Goldsmiths College, and material from the Malcolm McLaren Estate archive, including notes, sketches, personal items and clothing from *Sex and Seditonaries*, the notorious and publicly vilified boutiques he ran at 430 King's Road in tribute to those with "eyes for blowing up bridges".

The title of the exhibition is derived from the phrase, "de beaux yeux pour faire sauter des ponts", taken from correspondence between Guy Debord and his friend Hervé Falcou, 1949-53.

*Eyes For Blowing Up Bridges* is a John Hansard Gallery exhibition curated by David Thorp and Paul Gorman. With special thanks to the Malcolm McLaren Estate.

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## Notes for Editors

### David Thorp

David Thorp is an independent curator. He was formerly Curator of GSK Contemporary at the Royal Academy of Arts, Curator of Contemporary Projects at the Henry Moore Foundation, and Director of the South London Gallery. He was a member of the Turner Prize jury in 2004.

### Paul Gorman

Paul Gorman is a writer, curator and commentator on visual culture. Gorman is the editor of *Derek Boshier: Rethink Re-entry*, published in 2015 with a foreword by David Hockney. Among exhibitions Gorman has curated are public shows investigating Malcolm McLaren's engagement with fashion, music, art and design: *Let It Rock* at the Copenhagen International Fashion Fair, and *Art In Pop* at Magasin Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble.