

Aaron Angell

'The Year of the Left Hand' / 'Folkal Point'

12 September to 22 October 2011

Focal Point Gallery is pleased to present Aaron Angell's first solo exhibition. Taking the form of a project in two parts, and divided between the gallery's main space and project room, 'The Year of the Left Hand' / 'Folkal Point' includes a range of new material from the young artist's burgeoning practice, such as wall collages, video, sculpture, ceramics and painting – all made especially for Southend.

The title of the first series of work, 'The Year of the Left Hand' refers to the artist's joy at producing deliberately skewed hand-crafted works, and links to Alastair Crowley's idea of following 'the left hand path' as a method for practical magic. In this respect, Angell's objects are formed via unexpected textural amalgamations and contain a pleasurable incorrect form of beauty.

The starting point for the second new series of work, 'Folkal Point', connects the artist's interest in obscure folk music, rural and craft-based activities, ecological concerns and the marginal or radical-regional context of the gallery within which his work is situated. Here, ceramic braids, terracotta coins, back-painted Perspex paintings of face jugs, coins and mushrooms, together with four large wall drawings made with torn paper, two large black metal wells and a video of lava lamps, combine in the gallery to form a rumination on utopian activities from the past and present.

One could say that these two installations and Angell's current work in general is influenced by a diverse set of cultural reference points from the early 1970s; aside from the aforementioned British folk scene, two popular films from 1974 act as examples. *Contes immoraux* (Immoral Tales) directed by Walerian Borowczyk starring Paloma Picasso, which in Angell's view is the 'ultimate 70s erotic medieval movie,' and *Zardoz*, the famous science fiction fantasy directed by John Boorman starring Sean Connery and Charlotte Rampling, both form a link to the artist's current way of thinking.

We might also say that Angell's work links historical genres such as Brutalism and bricolage with contemporary collage, a subject that the theorist Hal Foster has dwelt on in his recent essay for the journal *October*. In 'Savage Minds (A Note on Brutalist Bricolage)' Foster writes "It's no longer necessary for us to individually dream," J.G. Ballard once remarked to [the artist Eduardo] Paolozzi; "the fiction is all out there." In this light, we might relate Brutalist collage not only to avant-garde precedents in art but also to contemporaneous models in adjacent fields concerned with the interconnection of the social and the subjective.' Similarly Angell's eclectic web-specific works, installation, photography, performance, and collaborations might represent a tendency where collage explores an intermingling of social issues and aesthetic explorations with his fellow young British artists.

As the artist Ryan Gander has recently said of Angell:

'Many of Aaron's works appropriate the device of colliding unexpected components that make you sit up with a jolt, but chosen with such ingenuity that when they collide they make a clang loud enough to leave your ears ringing.'

A unique multiple has been produced by the artist in an edition of ten to accompany his exhibition at Focal Point Gallery. *Rough Copse Serenade*, Glazed ceramic desk organiser, Approximately 300mm x 300mm, 2011 is available for £250 from the gallery.

Aaron Angell was born in Kent in 1987 in lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include 'Young British Art', Limoncello, London, 2011; 'Outrageous Fortune: Artists Remake the Tarot', Focal Point Gallery / Hayward Touring, 2011; and 'If I could sing only one song', Aaron Angell, Anna Hodgson, Isabel Mallet, Sassoon Gallery, London, 2010.

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