British artist Gareth Jones (born 1965) presents his first major solo exhibition in a public gallery. Describing it as a ‘retrospective of new work’, Jones returns to earlier projects and re-discovered long-lost works through his experience of growing up in Milton Keynes. He describes the new city as ‘the most ambitious social project of its kind in the UK, a benchmark for Modernism’. In this exhibition he explores the intersection of architecture and landscape through the lens of seventeenth century Dutch art, examining labels for future living.

Middle Gallery
The figure of the harlequin, an enigmatic performer and agent of misrule defined by a diamond-patterned costume, makes frequent appearance in Jones’ work. An earlier sculpture, Harlequin Dressing Room, 1996, imagined the domestic environment of this fictional character, an idea developed here as a minimalist boudoir, including a laundry basket and dressing table, Harlequin Box, 2011, containing the surplus material discarded after constructing Sliced Cube No. 2, 2011, while Mirror Box, 2011, creates multiple, circular reflections of the viewer. These three variations on a 30 x 30 x 30 cm cube – sliced, halved and opened – test the potential of low cost DIY materials to luxurious effect, while emulating the modular nature of Milton Keynes. At the same time they contain numerous associations. Jones has curated a programme of Friday Night Film screenings at the Picture of Dorian Gray, a gallery founded in 1970s, approached through memory and seen against the backdrop of political change.

Long Gallery
Twelve Men, 2011, presents a single-room installation using a series of cigarettes cigarette adverts that featured in Sunday colour supplements in the 1970s, with blue aluminium frames that suggest French cigarette packaging. Jones explores the politics of desire as saucy male models pose with this classic brand, exuding the immodest glamour and decadence of that decade. Collected as he was growing up in the newly formed Milton Keynes, these images were also used by Jones to illustrate an edition of Oscar Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray, 1891, a tale of Faustian pacts and eternal youth. Jones views the Long Gallery as a kind of modern boudoir, in which the scaled-down display creates a theatrical and powerfully charged atmosphere, inviting the viewer to occupy the space and prescribe meaning to the work.

Entrance Space
A multi-view postcard mailed to the Gallery Director is pinned to the wall, with the message ‘What time is this place?’. Postcard, 2011, intended by Jones as a ‘love letter to the Welfare State’, represents the utopian impression of an ideal city. Poster, 2011, blade-boxed to the wall, restores to visibility a defining publicity image of the new city and is available for visitors to take away. These images, along with the magazine pages in Twelve Men and the photographs in New City, use found publicity material to explore how identity is constructed through architecture, advertising and art.

The window box contains a selection of provocative aphorisms by Oscar Wilde, as laid out in Jones’ acclaimed edition of The Picture of Dorian Gray, published by Four Corners, 2007. Four of the most provocative statements are exposed, including ‘Is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors?’. ‘When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself’ and ‘All art is quite useless’. These statements anticipate a dialogue between the artist, viewer and artwork in the context of Jones’ exploration of the social and cultural landscape of Milton Keynes in the 1970s, approached through memory and seen against the backdrop of political change.

Biography
Gareth Jones was born in 1965 and grew up in the new city of Milton Keynes. He studied fine art at Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic and has worked in London since the start of the 1990s. In 2006 he received a Paul Hamlyn Award for Visual Arts. Previous solo exhibitions include Seven Pages from a Magazine, Platform, London; and Helmut Jacoby: Milton Keynes Drawings, 1967. Jones has curated a 1967 magazine project, combining Brighton and London homes of aristocrat James Fox. “I’m a gentleman’s gentleman, and you’re no bloody gentleman”, one of many unforgettable lines.

Friday Night Films
Selected by Gareth Jones to accompany his new work, this film programme unites a group of maverick British directors, artists and cultural icons, including Christopher Isherwood, Derek Jarman, David Bowie, Glenda Jackson and Lindsay Anderson. Spanning the years 1944–1994, the season covers a fifty-year period that sees the emergence of the Welfare State, the birth of Milton Keynes and the eventual dominance of neo-liberalism as an economic philosophy. Ideas emerge against the English landscape, the life of the artist and the social revolutions of the 1960s, move in and out of focus.

All film screenings start at 6.30pm / Tickets £5 (concessions £3) Pre-book at the Information Desk or on 01908 676 900.

- Tuesday 5 May / 6.30pm / Free Derek Walker on the Milton Keynes Tones A rare opportunity to hear Derek Walker, Chief Architect and Planner of Milton Keynes (1976–76) speak about the original Milton Keynes design team.

- Thursday 26 May / 6.30pm / Free What having about our future back? A discussion around Utopia with architectural critic Owen Hatherley, architect Derek Walker and artists Liliane Lijn and Gareth Jones.

- Thursday 9 June / 6.30pm / Free Gareth Jones and Michael Bracewell in Conversation Hear artist Gareth Jones discuss his work with novelist and cultural commentator Michael Bracewell.

- Tuesday 21 June (Summer Solstice) 6.30pm / Free Community in Art Participants in this event include artists Boyd & Evans and Roger Kitchen, co-founder of The Living Archive.

Friday 22 April
A Canterbury Tale (1944)
Dir: Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger (Cert. U, 124 mins)
The Living Archive.

Friday 29 April
... (1968)
Dir: Lindsay Anderson (Cert. U, 111 mins)
The Living Archive.

Friday 5 May
The Last of England (1987)
Dir: Derek Jarman (Cert. 15, 87 mins)
The Last of England, a thoroughly British mould.

Friday 12 May
Berlin Stories (1962)
Dir: Peter Greenaway (Cert. 18, 120 mins)
D. H. Lawrence and Ken Russell, two unlikely averts of the 1960s sexual revolution, join forces to cast Alan Bates and Oliver Reed into the greatest nude wrestling scene of all time. The word ‘maverick’ just about begins to describe Women in Love – and wonderful Glenda Jackson walked off with an Oscar.

Friday 19 May
The Draughtsman’s Contract (1982)
Dir: Peter Greenaway (Cert. 15, 131 mins) Peter Greenaway’s baroque seventeenth century setting and unusual cinematic symmetry more commonly seen in visual art. A murder mystery, a love letter to the English landscape tradition, and a cold analysis of the relationship between artist and patron. Michael Nyman’s musical score plays a starring role.

Independent Cinema MK and MK Gallery are working in collaboration to create a programme of Friday Night Film screenings selected or curated by artists and connected to MK Gallery current exhibitions.

Friday 24 June
Closing Event
On the final weekend of the exhibition Gareth Jones will introduce the screening of an additional work, specially produced for MK Gallery. Details to be announced.
1. New City
2011
Digital projection
Dimensions variable

New City features the work of photographers hired by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, principally John Donat (1933 – 2004). Also featured are photographs by Ivor Leonard, Jo Reid & John Peck and George Thompson.

2. Harlequin Box
2011
Polystyrene, card, paper, electrical tape
30 × 30 × 30 cm

3. Mirror Box
2011
Plywood, mirror
30 × 30 × 30 cm

4. Sliced Cube No. 2
2011
Card, paper, electrical tape
81 parts
Overall dimensions 31 × 31 × 31 cm

5. Twelve Men
1971 – 2011
Mixed media
12 parts
Overall dimensions vary with installation

6. Postcard
2011
Mixed media
Unlimited edition
10.5 × 15 cm

7. Poster
2011
Mixed media
Unlimited edition
36.6 × 25.7 cm

8. Window Box:
Spreads from The Picture of Dorian Gray
Words by Oscar Wilde.
Art by Gareth Jones.

All works courtesy the artist.

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