

A brief guide for visitors



Layla Curtis

Layla Curtis (b.1975) is a young British artist who has attracted considerable attention since her inclusion in the national touring exhibition of work by UK fine art graduates, *New Contemporaries 99*. After graduating from Edinburgh College of Art in 1998 she lived in Japan for a year. At Akiyoshidai International Arts Village she took part in a residency programme where she developed her trademark 'hybrid' map series and held her first solo show. She lives and works in London and has just gained an MA Fine from Chelsea College of Art. The show at MK G is her first solo show in a public gallery in the UK.

At MK G Curtis presents all new works based on sea, road and various world topographical maps, collaged into intriguing hybrid pieces. With the world political map in constant flux, Curtis's work invites us to consider such issues as disputed borders, international relations, unions, conflicts, internationalisation and globalisation. Some of her new work has been influenced by the grid format of Milton Keynes.

Here Curtis speaks about some of the new works, describing their sources and influences:

Milton Keynes Island – "Unlike most British towns and cities, Milton Keynes was planned from the outset rather than left to evolve organically. I aim to push this urban development to the extreme by creating a new man-made island. As populations rise a need for more space grows, angular shaped, man made extensions to the coastline of countries could well become a common sight. The idea for Milton Keynes Island was partly influenced from the time I spent living in Japan, a place where space is at a premium. I lived 40 miles from Kansai International Airport, which is famous for being built on a rectangular island of reclaimed land off the shore of Japan."

The United Kingdom of America – "This work is made entirely from maps of the USA. American place names are used as a substitute for British and Irish places; Birmingham in Alabama replaces Birmingham in England, Manchester in New Hampshire replaces Manchester in England and so on. By dissecting, dismembering and collaging maps of the USA, I have created a new hybrid map which takes on the form of the United Kingdom. I am interested in exploring the effects of disrupting the much trusted systems of mapping and with this work I invite the viewer to consider both the current and the historical relationships between the USA and the UK."

Index (Everywhere I've ever been) – "I am interested in how people relate to maps. Often when we first look at a map we immediately search for a familiar place in order to identify with the map and orientate ourselves. Seeing the name of a place we have visited on a map can often trigger off memories of our connection with that place. The piece is designed to resemble the index of an atlas, incorporating only the places I have been to in my lifetime. Although this work is essentially autobiographical, I hope that the work will function like a map, triggering anecdotal responses to places which are familiar to the viewer."

See over for list of works on display

List of works (in clockwise order)

You are Here, 2000

ink on tracing paper

A Familiar Place, 2000

collaged British road maps

Milton Keynes Island, 2000

collaged British road maps

The Four Corners of the Earth, 2000

ink on tracing paper

Edit 2, 2000

Collaged British road maps

Untitled, 2000

4 drawings; ink on tracing paper

The United Kingdom of America, 2000

collaged American topographical maps

Index (everywhere I've ever been), July 2000

inkjet print on paper

World Political (wall map), 2000

laminated collaged wall map

Some works on view are available for sale. Please contact MK G Information Desk in the first instance.

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Currently showing
in *Nightclub Robberies*
at Rhodes + Mann, London
11 Aug – 1 Oct 2000

Forthcoming exhibitions
The Armchair Project at Cinch,
London
11 Oct – 28 Oct 2000

Collections
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