

## News Release from Milton Keynes Gallery

19 Jan – 3 March 2002

### Art Crazy Nation Show

Admission free

Press View: Fri 18 Jan 17.00-18.00 Private View 18.00-20.00

Artist, broadcaster and writer Matthew Collings, most recently in the public eye as the presenter of Channel Four's Turner Prize Award programme, has selected an exhibition for Milton Keynes Gallery this January.

**Art Crazy Nation Show** features the work of some of the artists included in his recently published book *Art Crazy Nation: the post-Blimey! art world*. For the exhibition Collings has deliberately selected work which encompasses both extremes of contemporary British art. He includes glamorous celebrity-artists such as Sarah Lucas, Tim Noble and Sue Webster, Jake and Dinos Chapman, and Gilbert & George, alongside marginalised, old-style lyrical abstract painters such as John McLean, Gary Wragg and Geoff Rigden.

He says of its content: *"The works in this show are very different to one another. Some are more aesthetic. Some are more poetic. But with all of them I think that there is a secret visual quality which is important. The nation is crazy about art now, but they don't really know what it is that they are looking at."*

Collings believes that what makes art important and worth looking at is not a single impact 'hit' which any idiot in the media can understand, but rather art's depth and range of feeling. If there was a new political party for the end of art being popular, he says he would be head of it. He asks, "Why not just let something be itself?" He is profoundly sorry if he ever had anything to do with art's current popularity.

The exhibiting artists are:

Bank, Simon Bill, Merlin Carpenter, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Gilbert & George, Alan Kane, Simon Linke, Colin Lowe/ Roddy Thompson, Sarah Lucas, John McLean, Tim Noble and Sue Webster, Darren Phizacklea/ Rory Macbeth, Geoff Rigden, John Russell + Fabienne Audéoud, Bob and Roberta Smith, Sarah Staton, Gary Wragg.

Visitors will be able to see work in a variety of media including painting, sculpture and installation.

#### Exhibition Open

Tues – Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 11.00-17.00, closed Mondays.

#### Book

*Art Crazy Nation: the post-Blimey! Art world* price £22 (21 Publishing). Special price at the exhibition £18.

#### Introductory Guide

A 16-page illustrated booklet about the exhibition by Matthew Collings. Price £2.50.

Thu 31 Jan at 19.30 (Doors open at 19.00)

**In Conversation with Matthew Collings**

A chance to meet the exhibition selector and hear his thoughts on the British contemporary art world. Talk includes question and answer session. Tickets £3 (concessions £2), to include a glass of wine. Tickets limited and must be pre-booked on 01908 676 900.

Saturdays at 14.30 and Wednesdays at 13.15

**'Art for All' free guided tours** lasting c.20 minutes. An informal personal introduction to MK G and the current exhibition by staff members and others, focusing on two or three works. Ideal for first-time visitors of all ages.

Saturdays 11.00-13.00

**The Saturday Art Trolley** for children ages 4-12. A weekly drop-in session with free, prepared art activities for accompanied children, based on the current exhibition.

**Notes for Editors**

Matthew Collings is an artist and writer. He went to the Byam Shaw School of Painting, 1974-78, and to Goldsmith's College, 1990-92. From 1983-87 he edited the magazine 'Artscribe' and from 1988-96 he worked as an art critic and occasional presenter for BBC2's 'The Late Show'. Since leaving the BBC, he has written and presented two major television series for Channel 4 – 'This is Modern Art' and 'Hello Culture'. A further series on the art of the old masters is currently in production.

Milton Keynes Gallery opened in October 1999 as the city's purpose-built contemporary art gallery. It aims to bring new art to new audiences and admission is free. MK G estimates that by the beginning of 2002 it will have attracted almost 100,000 visitors since opening.

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Ends

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