

News Release from Milton Keynes Gallery

Sarah Lucas, Colin Lowe & Roddy Thomson: Temple of Bacchus

15 March – 27 April 2003

Admission free

Preview Fri 14 Mar 17.30-20.00 | All press welcome | Drinks supported by Beck's

This March MK G presents 'Temple of Bacchus', all new work by Sarah Lucas, Colin Lowe & Roddy Thomson. The artists will be exhibiting both individual and collective pieces, collaborating on the show's overall conception, themes and installation.

Thomas Brown noted of London in 1730 that "to see the number of taverns, alehouses etc. he would imagine Bacchus to be the only god worshipp'd there". (Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*)

"Everyone is drunk, but drunk joylessly, gloomily and heavily, and everyone is strangely silent. Only curses and bloody brawls occasionally break that suspicious and oppressively sad silence.... Everyone is in a hurry to drink himself into insensibility.... Wives in no way lag behind their husbands and all get drunk together, while children crawl and run among them." Dostoevsky on the English pub in *Summer Impressions* (quoted in Jeremy Paxman, *The English*).

Sarah Lucas shares with Lowe and Thomson a subversive use of humour to unsettle and provoke. All three artists confront conventional interpretations of familiar imagery and are interested in the commonplace, the common man. Lucas's provocative sculptures have used appropriated objects and common materials to form visual puns concerning sex, death and gender but her most recent exhibition, *Charlie George* (Berlin 2002), introduced new elements into her work such as the semantics of the seventies and football culture. Lucas's individual and collaborative work for *Temple of Bacchus*, continues to look at established English imagery – high and low – with new considerations of St George and the Dragon and the pub drunk.

Colin Lowe and Roddy Thomson met at St Martin's School of Art in the late 1980s but only began to work together a few years later. Their work is often text-based and frequently humorous. *The Hurangutang Letters*, a collection of pleas for corporate sponsorship and other correspondence, was shown in *City Racing: A Partial Account* at the ICA in 2000 and recently in *To whom it may concern* at CCAC Whattis Institute in San Francisco, both curated by Matthew Higgs. Their mobile bar, *The Dark Throttle*, was commissioned by BBC4 and shown at the Royal Academy's *Galleries Show* last autumn. Matthew Collings, who included Lowe and Thomson's piece *Enthusanasia* in *Art Crazy Nation Show* at MK G last year, has said of their work that it "seems to distil that excellent moment when the first couple of drinks kick in and any thought that occurs seems funny, creative and inspired. Drink, its comedy and its tragedy, is often the subject of their work but it's not their only subject. No artist has ever expressed the pathos, self-doubt, delusion, fear, strivings and ambition of creativity with such a light and bitter touch".

Publications

MK G will produce a modestly priced A5 concertina-fold publication shortly after the exhibition opens. It will include an interview with the artists and photographs of the exhibition installation. Price tbc. Matthew Collings's recent monograph on Sarah Lucas by Tate Publishing will also be available from the Gallery Shop at a special price during the exhibition.

Limited Edition Print

A print in a signed, limited edition of 150, based on a new portrait photograph of Sarah Lucas, Colin Lowe & Roddy Thomson by Geoff Wilson will be available from the Gallery Shop. Price tbc. To order ring 01908 676 900.

Free Exhibition Tour with MK G's Director

Wed 19 Mar | 13.30-14.00 | Pre-booking on 01908 676 900.

Visitors can join Stephen Snoddy for a free, informal tour of the exhibition.

Artists' Talk at the OU

'In Conversation: Sarah Lucas, Colin Lowe & Roddy Thomson and Gregor Muir'

Wed 2 Apr | 19.30 | £5 (£3 concs) to include a glass of wine | The Berill Lecture Theatre, The Open University, Milton Keynes. Gregor Muir, Kramlich Curator of Contemporary Art at Tate Modern, discusses the exhibition with the artists.

Tickets must be booked on 01908 676 900 during gallery opening hours.

Biographical note

Sarah Lucas was born in 1962 in London. Recent exhibitions include *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* at The Freud Museum, London, 2000; a survey installation at Tate Modern (ongoing), and *Charlie George*, an exhibition of new work at CFA Berlin, 2002.

Opening hours

Tues – Sat 10.00-17.00

Sun 11.00-17.00

Closed Mondays and for exhibition changeovers

Press information and images

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Ends

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