

Print the Legend

The Myth of the West

1 March – 4 May 2008

Exhibition Report

The
Fruitmarket
Gallery



Aims

The Fruitmarket Gallery's mission is to make contemporary art accessible without compromising art or under-estimating audiences. To present world-class, thought-provoking and challenging contemporary art made by both Scottish and international artists, in an environment that is welcoming, engaging, informative and always free.

The Fruitmarket Gallery is audience-focused and responsive to visitor comments, which are gathered on a daily basis. Visitors are invited to make written comments on a form in-house, and Gallery Information Assistants also make a note of any verbal comments made. At the end of every exhibition, there is a debrief with the full-time Gallery staff and the Gallery Information Assistants to discuss the exhibition, the public reaction, share anecdotes and any problems encountered during the run.

The Fruitmarket Gallery aims to be a welcoming environment for the enjoyment of contemporary visual art, for both recreation and education, by visitors of all ages, backgrounds and knowledge-levels. The Gallery provides audiences with the tools to access art for themselves, with interpretation and education programmes encouraging questions and supporting debate.

The Fruitmarket Gallery is open seven days a week,

Mon–Sat 11am–6pm, and Sun 12–5pm.

During the Edinburgh Art Festival in the summer the Gallery increases its hours to 10am–7pm daily to allow increased access during the busiest time of the year.

Most importantly, The Fruitmarket Gallery exhibitions are **always free**.

Print the Legend

The Myth of the West

1 March - 4 May 2008



Visitor Attendance (including events) 36,385

The Fruitmarket Gallery's major spring exhibition was a group show which presented a selection of northern European sculpture, photography, installation and film in the context of the western and its role in the creation of the myth of the American West.

Curated by art historian, lecturer, writer and the editor of Art Monthly Patricia Bickers, the exhibition had its origins in her long-standing fascination for westerns and took its title from the final scene of the film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*: 'Sir, this is the West. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend'. Arguing that the western is a key component in the construction of the myth of the American West, and that this myth is as politically and culturally relevant now as it has ever been, Bickers used the western as a lens through which to look at work by Adam Chodzko, Peter Granser, Douglas Gordon, Isaac Julien, Mike Nelson, Cornelia Parker, Simon Patterson, Salla Tykkä and Gillian Wearing.

Douglas Gordon *Five Year Drive-By*, 1995
Offsite installation, Market Street, Edinburgh
Photo: Alan Dimmick

Mike Nelson *Untitled No.22*
(*High Plains Drifter*), 2008
Photo: Alan Dimmick





'It is brilliant to see clever public art with a sense of humour. I noticed Douglas Gordon's, Five Year Drive-By on my way home on the bus. It was so vivid and cheered up the mundane daily commute and made me smile.'

'Enjoyable exhibition, I found the information video a useful tool in understanding the works'

'The exhibition deals brilliantly with many aspects of the western, something for everyone, I especially liked the Mike Nelson Piece. It was amazing'

'I always enjoy visiting the gallery there is a great range of media on display, I especially liked Salla Tykkä's, Lasso'

'I very much appreciate the feeling of light and space in the gallery. The exhibition made me think and took me to a world outside Edinburgh.'

'The best curated and presented show I've seen in the last year'

'I thought that Lasso was one of the most beautiful and moving short films I have ever seen'

'There are some great works in this exhibition, I arrived on the train from London last night and was struck by Douglas Gordon's piece as we left the station very impressive.'

'I came to this exhibition as my son recommended it. It is not the sort of thing I would usually go to but it's actually quite good!'

'The exhibitions are invariably first rate. This one is exceptional, hugely illuminating and hugely enjoyable. Keep up the good work as you always do'

'The quality was great. Good to see such a strong collaboration, it's really impressive as is the catalogue. The Gallery is gorgeous'

'This was a fantastic exhibition, it completely drained me emotionally.'

'The Fruitmarket is an excellent place. The myth explored in Print the Legend has been given new dimensions. The potential for interpretation of the West is as vast as its sky'

'Patricia Bickers interpretation DVD was really brilliant. As someone who isn't into contemporary art but loves the western, it really helped me to look at the show and appreciate it in a new light. Lasso was spectacular. Thank you!'

'One of the most outstanding and beautifully crafted exhibitions I have seen in many years, which will resonate long in my memory'

'I really enjoy coming to The Fruitmarket Gallery, as you can always guarantee to find something interesting and thought-provoking. I also think that its smaller scale and central location makes it a very accessible venue to visit'

Education Feedback.

Mike Nelson, Patricia Bickers,
Simon Patterson,
Artists' Talk



Seminar What Remains:

The life and death of skulls in contemporary art

I ... just wanted to drop you a line to say how much I enjoyed the seminar. As an art student (I'm currently studying BTEC Foundation Art at Telford College) I found the range of speakers and their diverse individual approaches to the subject really entertaining and educational – a great evening.

I did indeed enjoy the 'what remains' seminar – the mix between theorists and artists was excellent and it was really nicely paced and pithy... having seen the skulls event, we are most interested in working further with you.

(from a social anthropology professor, University of Edinburgh)

Exhibition Press

The Independent Sue Hubbard

So does the show work? Well such heavy conceptual underpinning is always tricky, but It does emphasise the myth of the American West as a land fit for heroes, at myth that seems to be as potent and as politically and culturally charged today than ever.

The Scotsman Duncan Macmillan

A new study of the Hollywood western gives an illuminating insight into the genre's place in our collective imagination, and how it offers an escape from everyday life.

The Skinny Rosamund West

Each of the many works on display contains something to absorb, coming together under a uniquely present curatorial voice to form a technicolour line of argument, a musing upon the presence of this particular myth of the other in our seemingly far-removed world. The exhibition both challenges our preconceptions of the significance of the Western as a genre, and brings to Edinburgh a truly world class selection of artworks. It is truly something to ponder.

Curator's evaluation

*I am very grateful to everyone at The Fruitmarket Gallery for helping me to realise *Print the Legend: The Myth of the West*, both the exhibition and the publication: Fiona Bradley for commissioning the show and for trusting me to deliver it; Elizabeth McLean for the fabulous design and layout of the book, as well as all the other supporting material; Matt and his team for their peerless installation of the exhibition; Louise for handling the press so well, Stacy for guiding me through the education programme, Matthew for priming the book stall and everyone else for making the show happen. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the whole experience was not just how everyone carried out their responsibilities so professionally, but how they all worked together as a team to ensure that nothing was left undone on the opening night.*

Patricia Bickers July 2008