ARTISTS' TALKS
Chad McCail | Saturday 11 Oct 2pm
Paul Carter | Thursday 30 Oct 6.30pm

FREE GUIDED TOURS
Guided tours start at the bookshop desk at 2pm on Wednesdays and Sundays.

GALLERY INFORMATION ASSISTANTS
Gallery Information Assistants will be in the exhibition between 12 noon and 3pm every day. They are available for impromptu tours of the exhibition, and to answer any questions you may have. On Wednesdays and Sundays at 2pm, they give scheduled live tours of the exhibition. No pre booking is required and tours are free. These tours are not suitable for large groups.

GROUP VISITS
Groups can book a visit to The Fruitmarket Gallery by phoning Tracy Morgan, Education Manager – 0131 226 8183. Group bookings must be made two weeks in advance of your visit.

For further information on The Fruitmarket Gallery Education programme ask at the bookshop or contact
Tracy Morgan
Education Manager,
T: 0131 226 8183
E: education@fruitmarket.co.uk

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SCOTLAND NOW | CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICE FORUM AND SEMINARS
Saturday 1 Nov, 10.30am-5pm: Forum
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Full Programme Available 6 October

A comprehensive overview of the support and training opportunities for young artists in Scotland, and a review of the *Visions for the Future* series. Speakers include co-curator *Zenomap for the 50th Venice Biennale* Kay Pallister (forum chair), Visual Arts Officer, Scottish Arts Council Wendy Law, Information Officer, Cultural Enterprise Office Fiona Pilgrim, Director of Programmes a-n Magazine Susan Jones and artists Graham Fagen and Victoria Morton (*Visions IV*) and Ross Sinclair (*Visions I*).

Seminars conducted by Cultural Enterprise Office: Professional Development Surgery, 1.00–2.30pm, Marketing and Presentation of Artists' Work to Galleries, 3.00–5.00pm

PUBLICATIONS | NOW AVAILABLE
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CHAD McCAIL
LIFE IS DRIVEN BY THE DESIRE FOR PLEASURE

VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE VI: NEW COMMISSIONS BY THE FRUITMARKET GALLERY

11 OCTOBER – 29 NOVEMBER 2003

Chad McCail's exhibition *Life is driven by the desire for pleasure* is the result of a three-year exploration into notions of desire, social and economic hierarchy, systems of power and the mechanisms of repression. The series comprises seven sequences of free-standing panels. Symbolism is everywhere in this exhibition and so to help us through the work McCail has created a separate key. The exhibition is curated by Jeremy Akerman.

> *The panels are arranged so that the viewer is not overwhelmed by the required effort to navigate the sequences and follow the route through the gallery.*
>
> *I'm presenting two fictional worlds – one, where people have harmonius and dynamic understanding of their desires and another, where the desire is inhibited and bound up with violence in the interests of a wealthy elite.* CHAD McCAIL

The work in the exhibition is a development of McCail's signature graphic style, brought into the large-scale, computerized, digital age. Previously, McCail's works were hand-drawn and coloured

using a combination of gouache and ink. This series represents a departure from this process, as McCail has chosen to scan his line drawings and develop and colour them digitally. The panels all start life as individual pencil drawings, which the artist combines and moves around on a light box. When he is happy with the composition, he goes over the drawings in ink before scanning them into a computer as a black line, then using the computer to add colour.

Life is driven by the desire for pleasure is a series of stories embedded within stories which resonate with symbolism. It begins with an introduction to one of the most potent symbols in the cycle – the snake, presented both as a human familiar (a close companion) and a life force shared by all living beings. The snake represents desire.

At times, the snake undulates freely around some of the figures in the stories, talking to them to express their desires. The snake is also seen knotted around the characters' middles, showing that restraint must be exercised. McCail's snake references both Christian and more ancient traditions. It is the snake that tempted Eve, but also the snake that sheds its skin, that bites its own tail in an endless cycle of life, death and regeneration.

The viewer's journey into McCail's world begins with an idealised, utopian society, in which collaboration and co-operation are the key to happiness. *Everything is Alive* shows a large, plant-like structure, around the roots of which parents are caring for a young child, teaching him to balance his own needs and desires with those of other people. A spray of daggers indicates the immaturity of the child's demands. The demand is refused, the daggers are returned to him by his parents and the child has to learn self-restraint. This first sequence culminates in *Life is Rooted in Sharing and Trust*, a panel showing people working, feasting and relaxing together. The top of the panel is dominated by an enormous snake, emblematic of satisfied desire and endless regeneration. The snake gives birth at its tail, and people move through it before being gobbled up again at the head. The snake is a sign that the whole process of life and death is governed by love.

In the second half of the series, beginning with the panel *Robots Run Zombies for Wealthy Parasites*, the narrative tone changes abruptly to parody existing societal and class structures. New characters are introduced: wealthy parasites, robots and zombies. The wealthy parasites are the moneyed; the few who own the means of production and therefore control distribution of goods. The robots, representing the middle classes, are shown as the wealthy parasite's happy minions who willingly do their bidding in return for material reward and the semblance of power. They in turn control a huge caste of zombies, who provide manual labour and work the hardest, yet receive the least for what they do. In order to make the zombies as compliant as possible, their snakes are knotted around their waists. This lessens their desire for fulfilment, capacity for anger and potential for resistance. As they have no way effectively to rectify social injustice, this anger comes to poison their relationships.

Individual stories within the sequences illustrate the bleakness of the artist's vision. Couples struggle for mutual understanding and love but eventually succumb to patriarchal structures in which the men dominate the women and teach their male children to do the same. Children are subjected to a compulsory education system in which they sit, tethered to their seats by their snakes, and are divided into trainee robots or zombies, their futures decided at an early age. Success in the system comes at a price – the only way for a zombie to get on in the world is to kill their snake and become a robot, prepared to inflict suffering on other zombies. If they do this, they will achieve the material success envied by other zombies, but happiness will still elude them.

Yet the artist presents his characters with an alternative. If the zombies listen to their snakes rather than killing them, they might learn that it does not have to be as the wealthy parasites command. The zombies could recognise that they only think they want to be robots because they have been conditioned to aspire to that level, and could therefore free themselves from the cycle of repression. The narrative ends with a return to a utopia governed by love and the regenerative power of the snake, where individuals are free and equal.

Chad McCail was born in Manchester in 1961 and studied Fine Art at Goldsmith's College, London. He lives and works in Edinburgh.