

Press release

April 2024



Jeffrey Knopf, *Now You See Me* (2024), film still.

40 Years of the Future: Where Should We Be Now?

7 July - 6 October 2024

Artists: Jeffrey Knopf, Theo Simpson, Hope Strickland

Presented in partnership with the University of Salford Art Collection, **40 Years of the Future: Where Should We Be Now?** brings together the work of a sculptor, photographer and artist-filmmaker - Jeffrey Knopf, Theo Simpson, and Hope Strickland. These artists are deeply committed to their disciplines, but also keen to work with them in expanded and non-traditional ways.

In both the content of their work and materials used, Knopf, Simpson and Strickland explore our complex relationship with the past, present and future. Importantly they challenge the dominant cultural narrative that the world has only one history. As Castlefield Gallery marks 40 years, this exhibition asks us to pause, to reflect and consider how we might imagine the future with the recognition that history isn't the same for everyone; that amongst the artists we work with and the people that visit Castlefield Gallery, the past is felt and experienced differently.

The exhibition will present existing pieces alongside commissioned works developed in partnership with the University of Salford Art Collection, some of which will enter the University's collection for the benefit of future generations. This builds on Castlefield Gallery's decade of co-commissioning and artist development collaborations with the University of Salford Art Collection.

Following a series of works made from digital scans of the archaeological objects on Sigmund Freud's desk, a new body of work by **Jeffrey Knopf** will include 3D printed sculpture, ceramics and digital video. Freud's last book *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) retold the story of Moses and theorised its lasting impacts on different faiths. Knopf's grandfather Jeff Joseph carried with him a number of plaques depicting Moses as he travelled from Iran through Egypt to be the first Persian Jew to settle in Manchester in 1913. Knopf's works intertwine personal stories, memories and experiences with wider social, political and historical narratives. His work is motivated by the realisation that not only people and objects but also principles and beliefs, can be displaced, lost sight of and changed over time. His defamiliarised, warped and difficult to identify sculptures suggest the potential in seeing things differently, of reconsidering the past to help inform the present.

Theo Simpson's work is rooted in photography, whilst incorporating other mediums such as printmaking, sculpture and text. His experimental approach uses a mixture of techniques from traditional hand printing, lithography and silkscreen to more varied fabrication processes found in engineering and manufacturing. His work mixes original photography with printed material from various sources such as newspapers, books, microfilm, television and auctions. The process of discovering these images is an important part of the development of the work. For **40 Years of the Future: Where Should We Be Now?** Simpson will present *Toward the Metal* (2024) the third part in a series of works, following on from *Map of Horizons* (2021) and *Dark Interlude* (2020). Previous works have made links across thousands of years of human interaction with the natural world, from the dawn of agriculture to modern mining. More recent work sees Simpson considering the impacts of a new pace and scale of global events, technological change and economic forces. His sculptural assemblages are constructed with a balance of control and chance allowing for multiple ways of reading the connections between the different materials, techniques, processes and images he uses. The poignant yet open-ended relationships between the elements in the works invite us to think about our own evolving relationship with the world we inhabit.

Filmed in archives and museums across the UK, *I'll Be Back!** (2022) by **Hope Strickland** explores a series of collections housing objects of colonial violence. Amongst these is a book containing a diagram of a slave ship, a key document in the abolitionist movement widely published for its shocking nature, and a collection of insects gathered in Sierra Leone by a colonial topographer mapping borders and defining British and French territory in West Africa. The film begins and ends with the story of the rebel maroon Francois Mackandal, who was condemned to be burned at the stake in 1758, not only for his crimes but for his radical powers of metamorphosis. Shifting across digital, 16mm and archival formats, the film interrogates institutional collecting practices and reconsiders the distances between myth, history and machinations of power.

**I'll Be Back!* (2022) by Hope Strickland was commissioned by FACT Liverpool with public funding from Arts Council England and Liverpool City Council.

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For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact: Leslie Remonato at Castlefield Gallery on leslie@castlefieldgallery.co.uk or 0161 832 8034

More on Castlefield Gallery

We are a contemporary art gallery and artist development organisation. Established in 1984, we've led the way in artist development for 40 years. We provide creative and career development, exhibition opportunities and commissions for artists and independents. We work from our galleries in Manchester, off-site, online and in the public realm. We create long-lasting impacts in our city region, North West and beyond. Our national and international activities focus on artist exchange. Castlefield Gallery's public and participation programmes provoke new ways of thinking, bringing together artists, creatives, communities and audiences to explore the art and issues of our time. We believe when artists and communities come together they can help shape a better world.

We support more than 300 Castlefield Gallery Associates and a host of creatives through person-centred development programmes. Castlefield Gallery New Art Spaces provide affordable making and project space in the North West of England, including on the high street. We are a home for artists and creatives. We are advocates for what we believe in. We believe in the power of new art. We make new art happen.

Ryan Gander OBE RA is Castlefield Gallery's Artist Patron.

We are a registered charity, supported by Arts Council England and Manchester City Council.

Discover Castlefield Gallery's programme release for its 40 year anniversary [HERE](#)

More on University of Salford Art Collection (UOSAC)

The University of Salford Art Collection is an ambitious and growing collection of modern and contemporary art, founded c.1968. The Collection aims to support excellence in teaching, research, community engagement and artist development; and actively acquires new work through a 'commission to collect' approach. It exists for the benefit of students, staff and the public, and works are displayed across campus, with key partner venues, and made available for UK and international loan.

<https://artcollection.salford.ac.uk/>

The University of Salford Art Collection is co-commissioning the new work by Theo Simpson and Jeff Knopf. Knopf's work is also exhibited as part of the 10 year anniversary celebrations of the University of Salford Art Collection Graduate Scholarship Programme, an artist development programme run and developed in partnership with Castlefield Gallery. Knopf was a Graduate Scholar in 2021-22 with a studio space at Paradise Works, where he is now a permanent member.

Exhibition Title: 40 Years of the Future: Where Should We Be Now?

Exhibition dates: 7 July - 6 October 2024

Preview: Thursday 4 July 2024, 6-8pm

Slow Saturday Preview: Saturday 6 July 2024, 12noon – 5.30pm

Images available [HERE](#)

Venue: Castlefield Gallery, 2 Hewitt Street, Manchester M15 4GB

Tel: 0161 832 8034

Web: castlefieldgallery.co.uk

Email: info@castlefieldgallery.co.uk

Opening Times: Wed to Sun 12noon – 5:30pm

Presented in collaboration with the University of Salford Art Collection

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40 Years of the Future: Where Should We Be Now? is supported by Castlefield Gallery
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