

## PRESS RELEASE

### Virtually Real:

# Illusion and Reality at University of Leeds Exhibition

#### Art Exhibition: 'Virtually Real'

1 March 2011 – 21 May 2011

Press preview: Monday, 28 February, 2011, 2-4pm

Opening Reception: Tuesday, 1 March, 2011, 6-8pm



Following the tremendously successful temporary exhibition 'Fancy and Imagination: Aubrey Beardsley and the Book Illustrators', the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery continues to bring critically challenging, important and enjoyable shows to the University of Leeds.

**The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery's Temporary Exhibition Room will transform into a fascinating contemporary space for three months, where artists experiment with optical illusion – and indeed confusion – to draw audiences into thinking about creating and representing space and time around us. The**

**exhibition 'Virtually Real' runs from 1 March until 21 May 2011. The Gallery is open from Mon-Sat, 10-5pm and admission is free.**

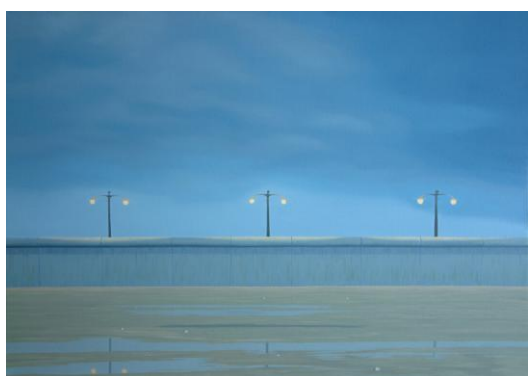
In a visual culture where digital photography and CGI create disposable and instantly digestible spaces, this exhibition brings together work that questions and subverts the representation of space in art and everyday life. 'Virtually Real', a group exhibition of nine important contemporary artists, will venture beyond the traditional spatial realism of paintings and the flattened panes and spaces of modernism, by focussing on the illusion of space, a central aesthetic concern throughout the canon of art history, with new methods and approaches. The artists participating are **Petros Chrisostomou, Bruce Ingram, Grant Miller, James Moore, Suzanne Moxhay, Jamie Tiller, Julia Willms, Simon Woolham and Dawn Woolley.**

Each work contains an element of trickery that confounds rather than confirms our expectations of reality. Their fictional spaces require the viewer to believe in the integrity of the scene and invite them to look closer to explore the fiction of the space they depict.

The exhibiting artists address the issues and concepts of representing and distorting spatial



reality in various ways. In **Dawn Woolley**'s work of photography, installation and stereoscopes, 2D photographs of female figures interact with 3D spaces in a comment on reality and idealisation. The intentional ease of spotting the optical trickery invites viewers to suspend their disbelief and see her as body and image simultaneously. **Simon Woolham**'s 'Pop-up' drawings also inhabit the space between two and three dimensions, where cut and folded paper transforms everyday objects into emotive sights for memory and recollection. **Grant Miller** deals with the illusion of space, creating paintings that appear abstract in the first instance, but reveal themselves to be complex physical spaces. **Jamie Tiller**'s manipulated photographic spaces also create an uncomfortable tension and distrust in photography traditionally considered as the facsimile of reality. **Petros Chrisostomou** photographs dramatic arrangements of small-scale everyday objects in architectural models, often employing lighting and staging conventions of the theatre. The play on proportions and scale, as well as the relations between real and imaginary in his work, are often commentaries on the distortions of contemporary mass media.



In **Bruce Ingram**'s collages, images lifted from different periods of art history are mixed with the consumer culture of today, resulting in works that confuse space and time. **Suzanne Moxhay**'s collages of found imagery present dystopian scenes that are seemingly realistic and yet completely fabricated. Invented architectural space forms the basis of **James Moore**'s work, where subject matter is built up from 2-D planes of painted paper to create

a 3-D CGI world. As Moore reduces virtual snapshots back to the realm of painting, or animates them as a rolling camera shot through the space, scenes from games, TV shows, films, comics and real places are re-organised into his imagined worlds. The relationship between real and imaginary spaces is also explored in **Julia Willms**'s video installations, which seamlessly merge into existing architectural spaces, offering the viewer a convincing version of reality that slowly disintegrates into impossible situations. The audience situated in the real space is invited to cross the threshold and step into the image.

The group exhibition 'Virtually Real' offers an accessible, yet inspiring commentary – not without a hint of humour – on our received modes of viewing representations of spaces and reality in art and the mass media. Visitors are invited to explore and interact with these fictitious spaces, and, if so inclined, to become part of them by walking through the exhibition.

An exhibition catalogue will be available for sale in the Gallery shop.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a full programme of related events, including the recently launched **Burton Saturdays**, offering creative activities suitable for all ages. Full event details can be found on the gallery website: [www.leeds.ac.uk/gallery/events.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/gallery/events.htm).

## **Notes to Editors:**

### **ARTIST INFO:**

PETROS CHRISOSTOMOU attended the Royal Academy Schools from 2005 - 2008, London in 2008 and has recently exhibited in Athens, Paris, Turin, Beijing, London and Liverpool in solo and group exhibitions.

BRUCE INGRAM has recently graduated from the Royal College of Art Sculpture MA and has exhibited at The Agency in London. In 2007 he undertook a residency in Kyoto.

GRANT MILLER lives and works in Kansas City, USA. He completed an MFA in Print & Drawing at Washington University – he has recently had a solo exhibition at the Black & White Gallery in New York.

JAMES MOORE graduated from MA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art & Design in 2002. Recently he has shown work at Castlefield Gallery in Manchester.

SUZANNE MOXHAY attended the Royal Academy Schools from 2004 – 2007 and has recently shown work at the Jerwood Space in London & Big Screen, Melbourne, Australia.

JAMIE TILLER lives and works in Amsterdam. He graduated from MA Photography at the Royal College of Art, London in 2008 and has recently showed his work in Kyoto, Germany, Krakow, Utrecht and Manchester

JULIA WILLMS studied Media Art at the University of Applied Arts Vienna – she has recently exhibited at Invisible Cities, TIAF, in Toronto, Canada and Gam | Obrist Gingold Gallery, in Essen, Germany.

SIMON WOOLHAM graduated from MA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art & Design in 2000. He has recently exhibited at Chapter in Cardiff & Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead.

DAWN WOOLLEY completed MA Photography at the Royal College of Art in 2008 and has works held in the collection of Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts in Japan.

### **IMAGE INFO:**

1. *Icarus*, by Petros Chrisostomou, 2008, colour photograph, diasec © The Artist
2. *Untitled (RPO-63)*, by Grant Miller, 2007, mixed media © The Artist
3. *Sea Wall*, by James Moore, 2010, oil on canvas © The Artist

### **IMAGE CONTACT:**

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### **EXHIBITION CURATOR:**

Layla Bloom, Exhibitions Officer  
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### **ADMISSION/ HOURS:**

10.00 - 17.00, Mon-Saturday  
Admission: FREE

### **VENUE INFORMATION:**

The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, Parkinson Building, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT

[www.leeds.ac.uk/gallery](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/gallery)

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The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery is an accredited art museum at the heart of the University of Leeds campus, refurbished in 2008 with funds from the Audrey & Stanley Burton Charitable Trust. The Gallery offers both a programme of temporary exhibitions and a display of selected treasures from the University Art Collection in its main gallery. An Education Room houses the University's collection of drawings and works on paper, while also offering space for private study, research and teaching.

Accumulated over more than a hundred years, the Collection consists mainly of European, principally British paintings, drawings and prints, dating from the 17th century up to the present day, with small collections of sculpture, ceramics, and photographs. Outstanding elements are the Sadler Gift of early 20th-century British art, the collections of drawings and paintings by artists of the Camden Town and Bloomsbury groups and their contemporaries, and works by former Gregory Fellows in Painting and Sculpture, and the recent gift of works from the late Stanley & Audrey Burton's personal collection of 20<sup>th</sup>-century British art.