

## **CAPITAL**

**Emma Charles Fergus Heron Thorsten Knaub Karen Knorr  
Martin Newth Eva Stenram Danny Treacy**

### **George and Jørgen Gallery**

12 July – 4 August 2012

London is poised. The world's gaze is directed at the nation's capital in the final weeks before The Olympic Games. This narrative runs alongside one of economic woe, recession and austerity.

This exhibition proposes a re-consideration of London as a capital city. The show considers the term capital, in reference to the city and money. Works in photography and the moving image by seven artists form a unique set of immersive, embodied, encounters and reflections upon London in a strange time of deep economic recession and international attention.

The artists' works highlight London's relation to power, history, trade and economic capital. London is depicted in contrast to the narrative of the moment, in a complex and fragmented relation to its history; a site of exchange, speculation, gendered power, surveillance, commodity display, desire and consumption, offering renewed reflection upon the city and contemporary economic conditions.

**Emma Charles'** video work *After The Bell*, made in the financial district of London, concentrates on the maintenance staff who occupy trading floors and offices during the night. The work explores the dialogue between these 'invisible' people and the spaces in which they work.

The capital is depicted as a space of consumer fantasy, reverie and desire in **Fergus Heron's** *Shopping Centre Interiors*. The empty malls reference fragmented architectural histories, emphasise the constructed character of the photographs themselves and depict the city as a space defined by aesthetics of consumption.

**Thorsten Knaub's** work *London/London* consists of a re-shoot of a Super 8 tourist movie, filmed by the artist's father in London in 1974. The double screen projection presents the original movie next to a shot for shot, take for take replica of the original filmed 36 years later. The work presents matching views of London linked by location but separated by a generation.

Made between 1981 and 1983 **Karen Knorr's** *Gentlemen* series present interiors of gentlemen's clubs in St James. Juxtaposed with extracts of texts from parliamentary speeches and news of the day the photographs comment upon the patriarchal values of the English upper middle classes and explore the ideals that ally these classes to conservative aristocratic values that persist today.

**Martin Newth's** *Panopticon* is made on the site of the Millbank Penitentiary, which was built following the designs of philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham. The panoptic view presented in Newth's negative images reference ideas of control, history, the gaze and the photographic.

*Buckingham Palace, London* is one of **Eva Stenram's** 2001 series *European Palaces*. By digitally filling in the doors and windows the palace is transformed into an oversized tombstone or mausoleum.

For *Them #24 and #25* **Danny Treacy** gathered abandoned clothing from the site on which the Olympic Park now stands. He then reconstructed the clothes into suits, which he wore for these life-sized portraits. This work explores the excesses, feelings of isolation and undercurrents of fear that pervade our city.

Curated by Fergus Heron and Martin Newth

GEORGE AND JØRGEN GALLERY 9 Morocco Street London SE1 3HB  
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Thorsten Knaub, London/London, 2010

## Review

### CAPITAL at George & Jørgen

By Iris Veysey on July 30<sup>th</sup> 2012

George & Jørgen is a small gallery in narrow Morocco Street, just around the corner from the White Cube, Bermondsey. It is easy to miss, with no ostentatious signage or flashy shop window front. Visitors must overcome the suspicion that they are in the wrong place, push open the grey front door and climb the stairs to the top floor, where the gallery occupies three rooms. Here, until August 3rd, they will find *CAPITAL*.

*CAPITAL* collects the work of seven artists: Emma Charles, Fergus Heron, Thorsten Knaub, Karen Knorr, Martin Newth, Eva Stenram, and Danny Treacy. Together, their work examines the notion of 'capital' city, probing London's status as a national and international centre. Finance and trade, history and progress, surveillance and power: all collide in a combination of still photography and video.

There is a feeling of intimacy to the exhibition, a sense of hidden things revealed: Knorr's *Gentlemen takes us inside the cloistered world of the London gentlemen's club*; Charles' *After the Bell* reveals city offices out of trading hours; Heron captures the Bentall shopping centre, empty of customers.

One of the most compelling works is Thorsten Knaub's *London/London*. This is a video installation comprised of two films. The first is a Super 8 taken by Knaub's father on a family holiday to London in 1974. The second is a present day, frame-by-frame replica of the Super 8. It is fascinating to watch them side by side. Certainly there are differences: fashions have changed, crowds seem larger, and CCTV cameras loom in the background. Yet much has remained the same. New buildings have appeared on the London skyline, but the basic physical makeup of the city is remarkably similar. Perhaps this is because Knaub is revisiting tourist monuments (Westminster, Picadilly Circus, and Trafalgar Square, for instance), but it highlights the contradictory streams of change and stasis that pervade a great city.

*CAPITAL* is an intriguing approach to London in this year of Jubilee celebrations and Olympic Games. It lifts the lid on the unseen city, from privileged club members to cleaners in the financial district. Confronting viewers with conflicting strands of poverty and wealth, permanence and transience, the exhibition confirms that a 'capital' is nothing if not contrary.

*CAPITAL is at George & Jørgen until 3 August, 2012.*

*For more information visit [www.georgeandjorgen.com](http://www.georgeandjorgen.com)*

*Vignette Magazine*

<http://www.vignettemagazine.com/exhibitions-events/capital-at-george-jorgen/>