

## ANCIENT & MODERN

'GERMINAL'

JEREMY DELLER & ALAN KANE

RUTH EWAN

IAN HAMILTON FINLAY

PREVIEW WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER, 6 - 8PM  
25 OCTOBER - 1 DECEMBER 2007

On 22 September 1792 the French National Convention established the first French Republic. Over the next year its Committee of Public Instruction, assisted by astronomers and mathematicians, devised a new secular calendar. Germinal was the seventh month of the year approximate to March/April in the Gregorian year.

Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane have realised a number of projects that question established ideas of taste and class and distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture. For 'Germinal' they have created a *Steam Powered Mobile Phone Charger* which follows a series of sculptures that have made a literal link between the Industrial and Digital revolutions. Dr. Sadie Plant's *On the Mobile: the effects of mobile telephones on the social and individual life* (2001) proposes the mobile telephone as a tool of insurrection. Citing the Oxford English Dictionary's etymology of the word 'mobile' she links it to that of the mob - as one of the earliest uses of the word 'mobile' was in association with the Latin phrase *mobile vulgus* - the excitable crowd. Plant outlines the use of text messaging in co-ordinating popular revolts in Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines and at anti-capitalist demonstrations in most Western capital cities. 'The Steam Powered Mobile Phone Charger', built upon a 1940s British army radio battery charger, designed for guerrilla jungle warfare, allows cellular phones to be genuinely mobile.

Ruth Ewan is concerned with the way in which radical ideas circulate, to be either popularised and absorbed into everyday life, mythologised or forgotten. For her recent project, *Did you kiss the foot that kicked you?* (a Jerwood Artangel Open Commission realised in October 2007) over 100 street musicians performed Ewan McColl's *Ballad of Accounting* (1964) within their usual repertoire across the City of London. McColl, the twentieth century radical, agit-prop actor, play-writer, folk singer and songwriter, originally wrote the song for the BBC Radio series 'Landmarks'. Its accusatory lyrics question the listener's subservience and

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failure to make an impact on the world around them and, as such, is something of a call-to-arms. *The Ballad of Accounting* is representative of what MI5 described in 1932 as McColl's 'very extreme views' and also of his 'exceptional ability as a singer and musical organiser'. For 'Germinal' Ewan will present a museum vitrine of artefacts relating to McColl and her recent project.

Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Little Spartan War* was 'fought' during the early 1980s with the Strathclyde regional authority and the Scottish Arts Council. Strathclyde demanded payment of rates on a farm building on Finlay's land. The authorities categorised the structure, originally a barn, as an art gallery, whereas Finlay claimed it was a garden temple and, as a religious building, exempt from such tax. 'Germinal' will feature a series of polemical and commemorative prints made subsequent to and during the resulting 'war' that celebrate Finlay's supporters, the Saint Just Vigilantes, and attack Strathclyde and also the Scottish Arts Council for failing to support his cause. Finlay named his garden 'Little Sparta' after the ancient enemy of Athens, as Edinburgh, Scotland's seat of Government, has long described itself as the Athens of the North.

Exhibition preview Wednesday 24 October, 6 - 8pm

Exhibition continues until 1 December

Open Thursdays - Saturdays, 12 - 6pm and by appointment.

For further information and images please contact [mail@ancientandmodern.org](mailto:mail@ancientandmodern.org)