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All images: *Make It New John*, 2009 (video stills).
Courtesy BBC Motion Gallery, Pennebaker Hegedus
Films, and RTE.



Make It New John
Duncan Campbell
March 9–May 1, 2010



Artists
Space

38 Greene Street
3rd Floor
New York
NY 10013
T 212 226 3970
www.artistspace.org
info@artistspace.org

Opening Hours
Tuesday – Saturday: noon – 6 pm
Sunday and Monday closed

Make It New John Duncan Campbell March 9–May 1, 2010

Opening Reception
Saturday, March 6, 6 - 8pm

“The DMC12 story intersects temptingly with the present in unquantifiable ways: the story of a collapsing car company chimes with the recent meltdown of the car industry in the US, for instance. These are avenues for speculative thought but they remain just that, seedbeds for argument. Indeed, seeing the past through the prism of the present might only warp it further. But in our moment, the past is never allowed to be just the past.” — Martin Herbert

Make it new John (2009) tells the story of the legendary DeLorean car, its’ creator John DeLorean and the workers of the Belfast-based car plant who built it. Campbell’s film deftly contrasts the DeLorean dream with its spectacular downfall during a critical period in Northern Ireland’s history, and the canonization of the car – the DMC12 – as a symbol of the American myth of mobility.

The son of an immigrant Romanian foundry worker, John DeLorean possessed a talent for engineering that took him to the top of Chevrolet, General Motors. Following his resignation from GM in 1973, he persuaded the British Labor Government to back his new venture – building a factory in Dunmurry/ Belfast to produce a new sports car. Almost immediately beset by financial difficulties and

allegations of embezzlement, DeLorean’s attempts to keep the factory open became increasingly disparate, eventually leading to his arrest by the FBI. The factory—which employed 2500 workers— closed in 1982 under the Thatcher government, having produced just over 9000 cars.

As with Campbell’s earlier works such as *Bernadette* (2008) and *Falls Burns Malone Fiddles* (2003), *Make it new John* (2009) fuses a documentary aesthetic with fictive moments, using existing archival news and documentary footage from the 1980s as well as new passages of 16mm film shot by Campbell, imagining conversations between DeLorean factory workers.

“I think that documentary relies on shorthand and parable as much as any work of fiction.” —Duncan Campbell

Make it new John (51 minutes) will be screened every hour on the hour.

Duncan Campbell lives and works in Glasgow. In 2008 Campbell was the recipient of the Baloise Art Prize and a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award. Recent solo exhibitions include Tramway, Glasgow (2010); Chisenhale, London; Kunstverein München; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna and The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (all 2009). His work has also been featured in Art Now, Tate Britain, London (2006) and Manifesta 5, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, San Sebastian (2004).

Make it new John was commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, Chisenhale Gallery, Tramway and The Model, Sligo.

Programs

Friday, March 5, 7pm
Screening at the Independent
548 West 22nd Street
Dust on the Bible, 1989, 16mm, 50min
John T. Davis introduced
by Duncan Campbell

“The Davis film that had the greatest effect on me ... was *Dust on The Bible* (1989), a documentary about street-corner preachers in Belfast. *Dust on The Bible* resonates with Davis’ earlier encounter with evangelical Christianity in America’s ‘Bible Belt’ as seen in his film *Route 66* (1985). Given such a soft target it would have been easy for Davis to simply draw the viewers’ attention to the parallels between the redneck mentality of America’s Deep South and attitudes of religious fundamentalists in Northern Ireland. He doesn’t eschew this point so much as render it ambient. The result is a bleak and tender portrait of the place, a journey through the cultural and economic void that was Northern Ireland at the time.” —Duncan Campbell

Part of an ongoing film series curated by Thomas Beard and Ed Halter

Friday, March 12, 7:30pm
Book Launch and Conversation

Duncan Campbell in conversation with Thomas Beard at the launch of a new publi-cation on Campbell’s work, which features a text by Martin Herbert and a conversation between Campbell and Melissa Gronlund. Published by Film and Video Umbrella and Tramway, in association with The Model, Sligo.

Saturday, April 3, 7:30pm
Screening
Shellshock Rock, 1979, 16mm, 44 mins
John T. Davis

A look at the burgeoning punk scene in Northern Ireland featuring early footage of bands such as Stiff Little Fingers, The Undertones, Protex, The Outcasts, Resus Negative among others.

Part of an ongoing film series curated by Thomas Beard and Ed Halter.

Mid April 2010*
Discussion with Luc Boltanski
Juicing the Equilibrium:
Critique, Value, Markets, Prices

Organized by Howie Chen and Jason Kakoyiannis in conjunction with Columbia University’s Center on Organizational Innovation. For more information visit www.jequ.org

\$5 Entrance donation. Members free!

* Date and time to be announced; please visit www.artistsspace.org for details

