

KATE MACGARRY

09 March - 20 April 2013

Kate MacGarry is pleased to announce an exhibition by Jeff Keen, one of the most significant British artist-filmmakers of the postwar period. His films were recently shown in the Tanks at Tate Modern in September 2012 and in a retrospective at the BFI Southbank, London in 2009.

Jeff Keen began producing drawings, collages, paintings and assemblages after serving in World War II, an experience that had a profound influence on his life and artistic practice. He worked in the Intelligence Corps on top secret experiments in weaponry. His early work shows the influence of the dominant avant-garde trends of the Forties and early Fifties such as Art Brut, Dadaism, Abstract Expressionism and the CoBrA Group.

In the late Fifties Keen began experimenting with film and was a pioneering adopter of pop culture as it exploded the artistic landscape. The film historian David Curtis has described Keen's creation of Pop Art film as unique in Britain at this time. His films use found objects for props and materials, fragment and rearrange sound, and incorporate film stock, comic strips and paintings in a tornado of work that brutally disregards conventional film-making. His films are immersed in the act of painting, and by incorporating painting as the subject and props for his films, he turned film-making and painting upside down.

In the Sixties Keen helped to setup the London Film-makers Co-op and was a regular contributor during this period. He worked with film, performance, assemblage and painting to create surreal worlds inhabited by comic book and B-movie characters such as Dr Gaz, Vulvana, Silverhead and Mothman. Guns, warplanes, comic heroes, sci-fi robots and lightning zaps collide in an explosion of style, subject and media.

Collage is fundamental to understanding Keen's radical approach to the artistic process, taking the influence of John Heartfield and Hannah Höch and incorporating more contemporary and pop-related fragments into film as well as painting and assemblages. During the Seventies Keen participated in the "First International Underground Film Festival" at the NFT and collaborated with William Burroughs and Jeff Nuttall. The Eighties saw Keen experimenting with video and computer technology, reflecting his engagement with technological developments and his fascination with science, modernity and machine culture.

Jeff Keen continued voraciously producing drawings, paintings, collages and films until his death in 2012. The current exhibition will feature a selection of Keen's seminal collages, paintings and films. JEFF KEEN born 1923 in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, died 2012 in Brighton, Sussex.

A retrospective exhibition Shoot The Wrx, Artist and Filmmaker Jeff Keen, is showing at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery until 21 April 2013.

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