

SPACE X

PRESS RELEASE

7 July – 1 September 2001

East of Eden

art : nature : society

PREVIEW: Friday 6 July, 6 - 9pm

A dual-site exhibition:

SPACE X GALLERY
45 Preston Street
Exeter EX1 1DF
10am – 5pm, Tuesday - Saturday

SPACE X 2
the former Maritime Museum
60 Haven Road, Exeter
10 am – 5pm, Tuesday - Sunday

ARTISTS: Stephen Bailey, Justin Carter, Chris Chapman, Clare Charnley, Paula Claire, Chris Cook, Thomas Joshua Cooper, Colin Crumplin, Andrew Dodds, Rebecca Earley, Annelies Egli, Nick Evans, Angus Fairhurst, Alec Finlay & Guy Moreton, Edwina Fitzpatrick, Andrew Galletly, Andy Goldsworthy, Stuart Gurden, Andy Harper, Elizabeth Haven, Damien Hirst, Cassie Howard, Mamuka Japharidze, Catherine Jauslin, Andrea Jespersen, Juneau / Projects /, Denny Long, Annie Lovejoy, David Mabb, Diane Maclean, Rosie Maguire, Jasone Miranda Bilbao, Nils Norman, Eduardo Padilha, Chris Parsons, Vong Phaophanit, Cecile Pitois, Martin Prothero, Susanne Radmann, Peter Randall-Page, Gavin Renwick, Abigail Reynolds, Sophy Rickett, Malcolm Robertson, Neil Rumming, Kate Scrivener, Louise Short, Andrea Stokes, Edward Summerton, Emma Tod, James UrSELL, Marcus Vergette, John Virtue, Neil Webb, Lois Weinberger, Emma White, Simon Whitehead, Helen Wilson, Louise K Wilson

EXHIBITION: *East of Eden* is a large-scale exhibition exploring different aspects of the relationship of society to nature, through contemporary art. The exhibition presents work by sixty artists, with forty-one selected through a process of national open submission (selectors: Clive Adams [Centre for Contemporary Art & the Natural World], Susan Derges [artist], Peter Fend [Ocean Earth Development Corporation] and the Spacex Co-Directors) and nineteen invited artists. The exhibition addresses a wide range of issues relating to the environment, from the re-presentation of nature to ecological strategies for social change. Particular themes include the current crisis in farming, the relationship of humans to animals, land use and notions of territory, the exploitation and manipulation of nature, climate change, and everyday domestic uses of the idea of nature, as well as reflection upon what it is to be a part of nature, the sense of time passing and the re-presentation of embodied experience.

In the Western tradition we are all children of the farmer. Cain killed his nomadic brother, Abel, and henceforth our relation to the land has been sedentary and territorial. East of Eden it seems that we are condemned to endlessly re-construct idealised models of Nature so that we might possess it, as if the microcosms we create are somehow removed from the society we live in. But if the 'natural world' is everything that exists beyond human intervention then we can never know it directly. Our experience of nature is always mediated through culture and history. Ultimately the only object in exploring the idea of nature must therefore be to examine the processes of its cultural production, and thus to reflect back upon society's uses of such a re-presentation. Just as it is impossible to regain the innocence of childhood there can be no return to Eden, but the collective desire for a 'lost paradise' remains a powerful social dynamic. Whether we are to harness it as a force for change, to arrest the human destruction of the environment, or continue to allow it to be used as a tool for the maintenance of basic social hierarchies is the choice we face. *East of Eden* is thus an exhibition that explores not only the re-presentation of nature but also the nature of re-presentation.

TALKS: Tuesday 17 July, at 7pm – Clive Adams, Centre for Contemporary Art & the Natural World (Spacex Gallery)
Tuesday 24 July, at 6pm – Edwina Fitzpatrick, exhibiting artist (Spacex Gallery)
Thursday 2 August, at 7pm – Nick Evans, exhibiting artist (Spacex 2)
Thursday 30 August, at 7pm – Ian Hunter, of Littoral, writer and activist (Spacex Gallery)

EVENTS: Saturday 1 September, 2–8pm, *River Rats*, ecological festival, including music, stalls and activities.
1-6 September – *Geocruiser. The Mother Coach. Zone: Earth*, Nils Norman's mobile eco-activist project.

East of Eden is presented in collaboration with the proposed Centre for Contemporary Art & the Natural World, scheduled to open at Pollimore House, near Exeter, in 2004. Additional support for the exhibition has been given by South West Arts, through CCANW. The research-based projects by Justin Carter, Rebecca Earley and Nils Norman have been supported by the University of Plymouth, with additional help-in-kind. Nick Evans has been assisted by Orchid Paradise at Burnham Nurseries Ltd, Newton Abbott. Audio-visual equipment has been supplied with help-in-kind by Film & Video Umbrella, with additional support given by Exeter Phoenix Media Centre. Nils Norman's *Geocruiser* is commissioned by Institute of Visual Culture, Cambridge, supported by the Arts Council of England and East England Arts.

Spacex Gallery receives financial assistance from South West Arts, Exeter City Council and Devon County Council. Spacex open season at the Quay is supported by Exeter City Council and Exeter Canal & Quay Trust.

For further information please contact Zoe Shearman / Tom Trevor, Artistic Co-Directors, or Caroline Mawdsley, Education & Outreach Officer at Spacex.