

THE MAYOR GALLERY

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For immediate release

Billy Apple® British and American Works 1960–69

16 September – 30 October 2010

The Mayor Gallery presents a major solo exhibition by Billy Apple opening 15 September 2010.

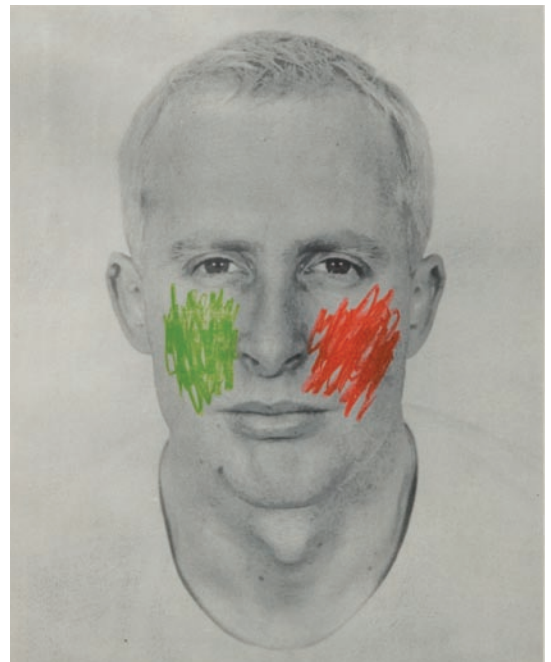
This will be the first time Billy Apple's works have been seen in London since *From Barrie Bates to Billy Apple*, his solo survey exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in 1974, and a unique opportunity to review his contribution to the history of Pop Art as it took shape on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1960s.

Drawing on works gathered together for the artist's first European retrospective staged at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam in 2009, with the addition of works directly from the artist's studio in Auckland New Zealand, this exhibition sets out to re-introduce a key figure whose artistic moves are an intriguing but overlooked feature of Pop Art as it evolved in London and New York in the Sixties.

Born in New Zealand in 1935, Apple (who was then known as Barrie Bates) studied at the Royal College of Art between 1959 and 1962, at an exciting moment in the history of the College, exhibiting alongside fellow artists such as David Hockney in the annual Young Contemporaries exhibitions, as well as designing posters for these important showcases.

After graduating he notoriously changed his name and altered his appearance (with the aid of Lady Clairol Instant Crème Whip), becoming 'Billy Apple' in a self-conscious art action that doubled as a canny exercise in re-branding (the implications of which he is still actively exploring in his practice to this day).

The Mayor Gallery is proud to re-present works Apple made for his 1963 solo show at Victor Musgrave's Gallery One that documented his dramatic and prescient self-



transformation, which included cast and painted bronzes of body parts and everyday foodstuffs, neons, and 'paintings'. Notably, the show features one of his *Self Portrait* series that made multiple use of a commissioned photograph by Robert Freeman, transferred by offset lithography to canvas, a serial image that pre-dates Andy Warhol's earliest screen-printed self portraits by some months.

These British works are brought together for the first time with canvases, prints, sculptures and neons produced after the artist moved to New York in 1964, an example being *Big Mouth*, a cast bronze of a half-eaten slice of watermelon, that was included in the groundbreaking exhibition *American Supermarket* at the Bianchini Gallery in 1964. This show-cum-event transformed the gallery into the simulacrum of an actual retail space, mixing real products along with works of art by Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Tom Wesselman, Bob Watts, Roy Lichtenstein and others.

The current exhibition also includes rare vintage photographs and ephemera that reveal the proto-conceptual nature of Apple's early practice and prove his integral role in the art scenes of both cities.

Together, all the works in the exhibition demonstrate the rigour of Apple's thinking as he navigated the rapidly changing British and American art scenes and developed his critical responses to the artistic, social, and economic consequences of living in an era of rapid technological change, expanding market conditions and the exploding horizons of contemporary image culture.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated publication (£15 + PP) that includes a major new essay by art historian Christina Barton, who has written extensively on various aspects of the artist's career.

Visitor Information:

Mon-Fri 10am-5.30pm; Sat 12pm-3pm - Admission: Free
Nearest Tube Station: Green Park or Piccadilly Circus.

Press enquiries:

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