

7 March 2008

## MAY 68: STREET POSTERS FROM THE PARIS REBELLION

1 May – 1 June 2008

The Hayward Project Space

1968 was the year that rocked the world. A time of unparalleled upheaval across the world, the remarkable events of 1968 created a legacy that was to shape a generation. To commemorate the revolutionary spirit of 1968, and to celebrate its own 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, The Hayward is presenting the first major display in the UK of posters produced by students and workers in Paris during the strikes of May 1968.



May 68: Street Posters from the Paris Rebellion  
Anonymous: Collection of Johan Kugelberg

These posters comprise some of the most brilliant graphic works ever to have been associated with a movement for social and political change. Produced anonymously by art students and striking workers, the posters were distributed for free, their bold graphic messages appearing on the barricades, carried in demonstrations and plastered on walls across France. The exhibition will include 46 posters drawn from the collection of the American writer and curator, Johan Kugelberg.

On New Year's Eve 1967 the French president, Charles de Gaulle, broadcast his annual message to the French public. *'I greet the year 1968 with serenity...It is impossible to see how France today could be paralysed by crisis as she has been in the past.'* Just six months later he was fighting for his political life. Anger and frustration over poverty, unemployment and de Gaulle's conservative rule gave rise to a mass movement for social change. An unprecedented wave of wild-cat strikes, walkouts and demonstrations by students, followed by a general strike, paralysed the French capital.

On 16 May students and faculty spontaneously took over the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* to form the *Atelier Populaire* (Popular Workshop), producing hundreds of silkscreen posters in an extraordinary outpouring of political graphic art. In a statement, the *Atelier Populaire* declared the posters *'weapons in the service of the struggle...an inseparable part of it. Their rightful place is in the centres of conflict, that is to say, in the streets and on the walls of the factories'*. Created using

bold colours on white backgrounds, these posters combine imagery with slogans to provocative effect: A green tank sits beneath the slogan 'Light wages – Heavy Tanks'; de Gaulle appears with a Hitler moustache; and a beautifully stylised flock of sheep is accompanied by the phrase 'return to normal'.

The exhibition is organised by Johan Kugelberg in collaboration with Ralph Rugoff, Director of The Hayward, and Jeff Boardman, Creative Director of Freewheelin'. It is supported by Converse.

Johan Kugelberg, says,

*"This selection of posters conjures up a radical past and will hopefully inspire a reaction against complacency. The ideas behind this uprising, and its spontaneous and rebellious outpouring in graphic art, should be utilised by us all."*

Ralph Rugoff, says,

*"The Hayward opened in 1968, an extraordinary year which saw student uprisings across the globe, political assassination in the US and campaigning for equal rights for women and black people. This exhibition will show a new generation the important role art played in 1960s political activism, and how this legacy lives in the work of artists and graphic designers today."*

To complement this exhibition, Magnum Photos will present a projection of photographs by Bruno Barbey, whose record of the Paris riots produced some of the most iconic images from that year.

Of that time, Bruno Barbey, says,

*'The emergency was to communicate, to talk to each other, to question everything. It was the rebellion of a whole generation against what society had in principle prepared for it, a rebellion against everything that came from above. Slogans covered the walls: "It is forbidden to forbid", "Beneath the cobble stones, the beach", "Enjoy with no hindrances" ... It was the rebellion of the youth of one of the richest countries in the world.'*

**May 68** is part of *All Power to the Imagination! 1968 and Its Legacies*, a season of events across London. The programme marks the creative resistance of a remarkable year, while placing its lessons in the context of our own times. From April to June this major season explores 1968 culture, politics and thought and their legacy manifestations in cinema, visual art, literature, music and activism. For further information please visit [www.1968.org.uk](http://www.1968.org.uk)

The season is supported by the International Herald Tribune

### **May 68: Street Posters from the Paris Rebellion**

The Hayward Project Space, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road. London SE1 8XX

Admission: Free

Opening Hours: 10am - 6pm, Friday late night opening until 10pm

### **Notes to Editors:**

Johan Kugelberg is a writer and curator who has curated exhibitions on popular culture and documentary photography in the UK, Sweden, Japan and the US. His recent books include *Born in the Bronx – A Visual Record of the Early Days of Hip Hop* and *c/o The Velvet Underground New York NY*. Future projects include an exhibition of Daido Moriyama in New York at the Steven Kasher Gallery, and collaboration with photographer, Peter Beste documenting the Norwegian Black Metal subculture. Later this year Johan is curating the first major auction devoted to the punk movement at Christies.

Jeff Boardman is Creative Director of brand consultancy, Freewheelin'. Along with his business partner, Vikas Malik, he gave Banksy his first exhibition in London. He has collaborated with Johan Kugelberg on the book *Born in the Bronx – A Visual Record of the Early Days of Hip Hop*, and the exhibition *The Vintage T-shirt Show*.

### **Magnum Photos**

Founded in 1947 Magnum Photos is one of the world's oldest surviving photographer co-operatives. With powerful individual vision, Magnum photographers document the world and interpret its people, environment, politics and events. Magnum Photos global 1968 anniversary projects include talks, book launches, projections and Magnum In Motion essays, with a dedicated 1968 website from [www.magnumphotos.com](http://www.magnumphotos.com) going live in April. A print sale exhibition of Magnum's 1968 images will be held at the Magnum Photos Print Room, 63 Gee Street, London EC1V 3RS.

### **The Hayward Projects Space**

The Hayward Projects Space, which opened summer 2007, showcases the best, up-and-coming contemporary artists from the UK and internationally, many of whom have not shown in the UK before. Admission is free.

### **Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 *Festival of Britain*. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and The Hayward as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Hayward manages Hayward Touring exhibitions; and the Arts Council Collection on behalf of Arts Council England.

**For further PRESS information please contact Sarah Davies, Visual Arts Press Manager, on 020 7921 0887 or [sarah.davies@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:sarah.davies@southbankcentre.co.uk)**