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MIT List Visual Arts Center presents
From the collection: *Bernadette* a film by Duncan Campbell

May 8-July 12, 2009

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 7, 2009, 5:30-7:30 PM

Thursday, May 21, 2009, 7PM, Bartos Theatre
An artist talk by Duncan Campbell

Cambridge, MA-April 2009. The MIT List Visual Arts Center is pleased to present *Bernadette* (2008), a film by the Irish artist Duncan Campbell, who lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland. Campbell's 37 minute, color and black-and-white film was shot on 16mm film and transferred to DVD.

Bernadette is Campbell's portrait of Bernadette Devlin (McAliskey), who during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, was one of the founding members of the People's Democracy Party. In 1969 Devlin became, at the age of twenty-one, the youngest person ever elected to Parliament at the time. A firebrand and provocateur, she campaigned under the slogan "I will take my seat and fight for your rights" meaning that she would not, like others before her, use abstentionism to signal resistance.

In 1969, Devlin served a six-month jail term for incitement to riot for her role (on the side of the residents) in the "Battle of the Bogside" in Derry. When Mayor John Lindsay awarded her the keys to the city of New York in 1969, she promptly passed them on to the Black Panther Party; and in 1971, she was one of five Northern Ireland MPs that took part in a hunger strike in front of the Prime Minister's residence at 10 Downing Street in London.

Devlin was in Derry for a Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association march in the Bogside on January 30, 1972, an incident known as Bloody Sunday. Members of the 1st Battalion of the British Parachute Regiment shot twenty-seven protesters, including seven teenagers, some in the back. Thirteen died. Devlin should have been allowed to speak in Parliament about this event (it is parliamentary convention that any MP witnessing an incident under discussion be granted an opportunity to speak) but was denied this right. When she struck Reginald Maudling (Secretary of State for the Home Department in the Conservative government) after he stated to Parliament that the British Army had fired in self-defense, she was temporarily suspended.

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These important actions take place off camera and the viewer afterward must deduce what has happened from Campbell's use of vintage photos and film footage, including snippets or out-takes of interviews; in one scene Devlin is "interviewed" by a newscaster in absentia.

As the film progresses, it is as though we cannot get enough of these mediated images of a young woman who was burdened by both celebrity and enormous responsibility at a very young age. Campbell stitches his historical footage together by inserting blank sections, animation, and various sounds. At one point in the film a female narrator begins to read sections Devlin's autobiography, *The Price of My Soul*, but she soon interrupts herself and begins to interrogate and upbraid herself. Here, Campbell moves seamlessly from the authentic to the imagined. In this section of the film, the archival is abandoned for the artistic; Campbell's poetic prose is voiced over manipulated images of Devlin and her birthplace, County Tyrone. The artist both employs and spurns narrative story telling, and his method of working deliberately frustrates any attempt to own the truth about Devlin:

I wanted to faithfully represent Devlin, to do justice to her legacy. Yet I worked with mediated images of her and writings about her. What I produced can only ever be a selection of these representations, via my own obsessions and my desire to make winning art of her.¹

About the Artist

Duncan Campbell completed his MFA at Glasgow School of Art in 1998 and BA Fine Art at the University of Ulster in 1996. He lives and works in Glasgow and is represented by Hotel, London. Solo exhibitions include Ludlow 38, New York, NY (2009); *Bernadette*, Hotel, London, UK (2008); *Sigmar, 0-60*, ICA London, London, UK (2008); *The Unnamable*, Lux, London, UK (2006); *Falls Burns Malone Fiddles*, Galerie Luis Campana, Cologne, Germany (2004); and *Falls Burns Malone Fiddles*, Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland (2003).

Campbell has been featured in a recent acquisitions exhibition at SNGMA Edinburgh (2008). He has shown in group exhibitions including *A Rictus Grin*, Broadway 1602, New York, NY (2008); *After October*, Elizabeth Dee, New York, NY (2008); *You have not been honest*, Museo D'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples, Italy (2007); *Art Now Lightbox*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2006); *Archaeology of Today*, Els Hanappe Underground, Athens, Greece (2005); *Revolution is Not What it Used to Be*, S1 Artspace Sheffield, UK (2004); Manifesta 5, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, San Sebastian (2004); *Emotion Eins*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany (2004); *Fresh and Upcoming*, a project with Luke Fowler at Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany (2003); and *Old Habits Die Hard*, Sparwasser HQ Berlin, Germany and Norwich Gallery, Norwich, UK (2003).

Support for this exhibition was generously provided by the Consulate General of Ireland, Boston, the Council for the Arts at MIT, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Media Sponsor: Phoenix Media/Communications Group



Directions:

The MIT List Visual Arts Center is located in the Wiesner Building, 20 Ames St., at the eastern edge of the MIT campus. It is in close proximity to Kendall Square, Memorial Drive, and the Longfellow Bridge.

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By T, take the red line to the Kendall/MIT stop, follow Main St. west to Ames St., turn left, and walk one block to the cross walk. The MIT List Visual Arts Center housed in a building identifiable by its white gridded exterior, will be on your left. Signage is on the building.

By car, coming across the Longfellow Bridge or from Memorial Drive, follow signs for Kendall Square. Limited metered parking is available on Ames Street. A parking garage is located at the Cambridge Center complex (entrance on Ames between Main and Broadway) during business hours and on campus after business hours and on weekends.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Wednesday: 12-6PM; Friday-Sunday: 12-6PM; Thursday: 12-8PM; Closed Mondays and July 4

Information: 617.253.4680 or <http://listart.mit.edu>

All exhibitions at the MIT List Visual Arts Center are free and open to the public. Wheelchair accessible. Accommodations are provided by request.

ⁱ "Irish born Artist Duncan Campbell Presents Film Bernadette at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art" in *ArtDaily.org*. http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=11&int_new=27385&int_mod=1

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