



## Son Gallery

by Guy Robertson

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Having made it through a second bitter winter in our bedrooms above Son Gallery, in the Copeland Industrial Park in Peckham, Tom Saunderson and I are slowly but surely starting to make a reality of running an independent gallery. I reconnected with Tom, who I had originally met whilst I was studying at Chelsea Art College, when I returned to London in August 2009 having studied Art History in Edinburgh. Tom is an artist and my co-director at Son Gallery and we share an interest in photography and lens based media. It was whilst I was curating an exhibition of his that together we began to notice a real lack of representation for emerging artists working with these media. This was attested to by the growing number of artists I was now meeting in London: It was a natural step, albeit a daunting one at first, to start making plans to open our own gallery.

Having myself had no professional experience in the established gallery world I recently asked Nicholas Logsdale, the director of the Lisson Gallery, of which I am a great admirer, for a few words of advice. After our meeting he challenged me with these words: "So, what's the agenda with the young people now? What's the ideology?" Well, the Lisson was set up in the 1960s, in an age of ideologies. Today, ideologies seem scarce, perhaps we are too knowledgeable for our own good, and we are characterised by a certain cynicism. However, to answer this challenge, and in the same breath to describe the mould that Son Gallery offers: What I am seeing now, with the artists we are working with, is a series of more localised attempts to understand and assess the ways that knowledge is accessed, shared and put to use. These enquiries often pay attention to the processes of cultural production, they disassemble ideology and sometimes suggest new ones: selecting, and looking to make sense of, important personal and social issues.

In these terms artists are more important now than ever before: their role is to decelerate cultural production, to refine the vicious flows of information that define us into a series of meaningful experiences. We hope that our gallery offers a space where artists and audiences can experience this brake on life. With particular reference to photography these words of William Faulkner seem appropriate, "The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that a hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life."

In the twenty-first century the camera and the screen, in all their still, moving and interactive capacities, are of utmost importance: and so it is with this in mind that Son Gallery has a strong interest in showing and developing work which relates to lens based media. Having said this, when Tom and I opened the gallery our goal was also to put these media into a direct debate with painting, drawing and sculpture, in the process pushing the boundaries of the former by encouraging a questioning of their possibilities and limitations. One gallery initiative that has helped promote this dynamic is 'Son Gallery invites', a series of shorter exhibitions, punctuating the main programme, in which artists are invited to produce experimental or new work in the public space.

So fourteen months and twelve exhibitions after opening the gallery and its remarkable to look at the progress our artists have made and the energy that Peckham has garnered. Since we opened our gallery many others have arrived and added to the vibrant scene, including The Sunday Painter, New Gallery, Arcadia Missa and the Peckham Space. The Copeland Industrial Park, rapidly earning its name as the Copeland Cultural Quarter, has a growing number of artists taking studios in the old Bussey building, as was illustrated by the successful open studios organized by FoodFace, and there is also a darkroom being built on the ground floor. As the summer beckons we are hearing about new projects all over this part of town, and we can't wait to see them in action.

For more information please contact [info@songallery.co.uk](mailto:info@songallery.co.uk). Opening hours: Friday and Saturday 1200 - 1800.  
We are often in the offices in the gallery so please do call 0207 635 9367 to view outside of opening hours.  
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