

The logo features the words 'TOTAL RECALL' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. 'TOTAL' is positioned above 'RECALL'. Below 'RECALL' is the subtitle 'MYTH & MEMORY' in a smaller, black, all-caps sans-serif font. At the bottom, the words 'PRESS RELEASE' are written in a bold, black, all-caps sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several semi-transparent circles in yellow, pink, and light blue, and faint, larger versions of the words 'TOTAL' and 'RECALL' are visible in the background.

**TOTAL
RECALL**
MYTH & MEMORY
PRESS RELEASE

MERCER ART GALLERY

EXHIBITION OPENING: 13TH JULY 2023

GALLERY OPENING HOURS: 10.00-12.00 AND 14.00-1600

FREE ADMISSION

The Mercer Art Gallery is pleased to announce the summer exhibition TOTAL RECALL: MYTH AND MEMORY. The exhibition features highlights from the collection, new acquisitions, plus works from five exciting Northern artists: Sally Barker, Ka Bird, Jill McKnight, K Walker, and Hang Zhang.

TOTAL RECALL: MYTH AND MEMORY interweaves contemporary art and recent acquisitions with works from the Mercer Gallery's permanent collection. The exhibition proposes new connections between artists from the past and present, creating fresh dialogues between works. The show questions the certainty of objects to present absolute truths. As we are living through a period of unprecedented uncertainty, TOTAL RECALL invites the audience to consider the flux of time and ephemerality of memory. To heighten these dialogues, the Mercer Gallery has invited five Northern Artists to exhibit alongside works from the collection. This allows the Mercer Gallery to present perspectives from our own time and communities. Sally Barker, Ka Bird, Jill McKnight, K Walker, and Hang Zhang each bring a different media that expands the scope of the exhibition.

The impetus for the exhibition has been the recent acquisitions that each subvert conventional ways of viewing objects, engaging with experiences, and remembering the past. In 2023, the Mercer Gallery was gifted a sculpture by Martin Creed. The work, titled "Work No. 88", consists of a piece of paper crumpled into a ball. This work asks the viewer to consider what the paper had been, what it could have been, and what it could be used for now. Each of these thoughts has provoked the connecting threads that intertwine the rest of the exhibition. Paired alongside works by Serena Partridge, who creates work that reveals hidden histories of objects, the exhibition will expose the often-veiled complexity of the world around us. Sally Barker's sculpture discloses the unacknowledged histories and power of clothing by casting pockets and bras. Clothing is reimagined as weaponry and proposes new ideas of how we clothe ourselves.

Drawing on the literary inspiration behind Sarah Pickstone's watercolour works, TOTAL RECALL investigates the fusion of fantasy and reality. Featuring surrealist works that highlight contrasting experiences of existence, the exhibition is lyrical, playful, and provocative. It encapsulates the act of internalising experiences in the brain and fusing disparate moments together. Other works in the exhibition delve deeper into the power of the mind, including K Walker, whose video and puppet installation reaches into the internal experiences of an individual. This complements other works that explore ideas of soothing, healing, and processing experiences. Photography by Dorothy Cross and Kate Mellor bring elements of surrealism and absurdity to the show. The surrealism is compounded in textural sculpture by Jill McKnight that appear unnerving but generate conversations between materials, narratives, and symbolic identity. In our gallery extension, we will present work that investigates the fluid ephemerality of the night. Paintings by the celebrated Brazilian artist Cândido Portinari and John Atkinson Grimshaw are illuminated by neon works by Leeds-based Hang Zhang.

Emotional landscapes by John Piper interrogates the concept of place and the physical world. This is complemented by a series of landscape paintings by Chris Wood. These synthesise our world with the primordial and archaeological histories that are often obscured by modern living. Contrasting the romanticisation of the past is Ka Bird's use of AI technology in painting, which fuses reality with the digital. Bird creates imagined landscapes with AI that ask us to consider different futures and moving into impossible spaces. These differing engagements with landscape present the varying engagement we have with the world around us.

TOTAL RECALL: MYTH AND MEMORY rejects chronological containment, instead focusing on emotional connections. This mimics the experience of human existence, where following the thread of one memory can provoke unimaginable intersections of thought. Many works are closely connected with Harrogate and the North. The exhibition is curated by the Mercer Gallery's Head Curator, Karen Southworth, in collaboration with Joe Nickols, a Yorkshire curator and writer.

For further information please contact:

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