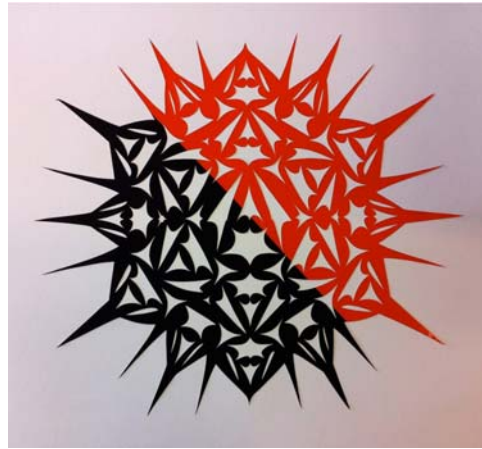


Red, White and Blue @ Chelsea Space, London  
07/11/12 – 08/12/12

Works are given equal placing in accompanying literature, in fact photographic and video/film works feature heavily in the catalogue-booklet. However the large showcase part of the gallery with windows overlooking the courtyard of Chelsea College of Art & Design, predominately displays painting-like works hanging on the walls. Elements of these works such as the curved silhouettes of Clements' Joy Division referencing paintings, the wall-mounted vinyl print and floor-based sprayed car door of Carvell, along with Periton's graphic paper cutout featuring the anarchy symbol, introduce a subversive undertone to the show.



Pil & Galia Kollektiv, WE, video still, 2011



Simon Periton, Argy-Bharji, cut paper, 2000

Brick walls in Stepney, faded union jacks and the Routemaster bus mingle with Eastern European political posters and reference to American culture in 'Elvis Lives in Levis'. Who are we supposed to be positioning ourselves against, and why is punk and popular culture so pertinent? Is the aim to challenge what is even expected of an exhibition? Seemingly subjective choices of cultural references force the viewer into taking the curator's stance, through assumption of our collective cultural memory, and through reminders of anarchic tendencies in our national past.

Curator Donald Smith's own fanaticism of the British Punk era, supported by the archival example of Mick Jones Rock & Roll Public Library, makes this a very 'British' focussed exhibition. But how does this resonate with the expectations of the predominately academic, multi-national visitor profile at Chelsea College of Art & Design? In taking a political/subjective stance, this exhibition allows the document to displace the artwork, and in doing so transforms the gallery into an archive.

Ruth Solomons 2012