



Freed From Desire

The Bomb Factory Marylebone
206 Marylebone Road, NW1 6JQ
8th–31st October

Opening hours: Wednesday - Saturday 12pm - 6pm

Artists: Annie Trevorah, Andrew Pierre Hart, Barry Reigate, Eddie Peake, Farnoush Amini MRSS, Hannah Rose Stewart, Henry Coleman, Jill Townsley, Kren, Marcus Nelson, SDNA, Pallas Citroen

The Bomb Factory Art Foundation is pleased to announce *Freed From Desire*, its annual October group exhibition, opening at our Marylebone Gallery on 8th October. Bringing together painting, sculpture, installation, performance and music, the exhibition explores the reclamation of space as an act of resistance. When people lose faith in their political power and their ability to make change, creative moments erupt outside organisational authority.

In the late 1980s, against a backdrop of unemployment, financial hardship and the introduction of Poll Tax, the Acid House movement transformed warehouses, disused buildings and other overlooked spaces into sites of gathering. These temporary spaces offered a counter-culture beyond the structures that governed everyday life, creating moments in which the usual boundaries of class, gender and race could be disrupted. The government responded by criminalising such gatherings. *Freed From Desire* returns to the movement's belief that gathering can itself be an act of defiance, as well as an expression of joy, freedom and collective possibility.

At the heart of the exhibition is the third place, a term popularised by the sociologist Ray Oldenburg to describe spaces beyond home and work that foster community and connection. Across the city, these spaces are rapidly vanishing, lost to soaring rents and cuts to civic funding. *Freed From Desire* considers what happens when they are gone, and how we can create them again.

The exhibition itself becomes a temporary third place, shaped by the artworks and situations encountered throughout the building. Painter and multidisciplinary artist Andrew Hart has created a chill-out room informed by his relationship with music and British club culture. His paintings respond to rhythm, atmosphere and the changing energy of a room, forming an installation designed to be experienced as much as viewed.

Elsewhere, Hannah Rose Stewart presents a small maquette of a former Newcastle pub where she spent her clubbing days. Now long gone, it is one of countless entertainment spaces since lost or repurposed. Henry Coleman, whose work examines our history through buildings, space and signage, has salvaged and repurposed 1980s leisure centre lamps that draw on the infrastructure of our lost community spaces, recalling places once designed for collective use and prompting reflection on their loss.

Eddie Peake's painting turns from the collective to the personal: a euphoric sexual fantasy rendered in car body paint, in which a reclining nude and a ghostly, shape-shifting figure blur the line between reality and dream. The work speaks to the freedom these spaces have long offered, where desire and identity could be explored without judgement.

Across the exhibition, a series of surreal sculptural interventions and paintings punctuates the space. Appearing unexpectedly throughout the gallery, these works introduce moments of disruption and strangeness into the visitor's journey, echoing the encounters, discoveries and shifts in atmosphere that can happen when people come together for a night out without knowing who they will meet or what will follow.

At a time when cultural organisations and communities are increasingly required to operate through temporary and precarious spaces, *Freed From Desire* also reflects on The Bomb Factory's own experience of spatial uncertainty. Following the loss of its Holborn home, the Foundation continues, against all odds, to create cultural spaces across London, providing places where artists and audiences can meet, work and form new communities.

Rather than simply mourning what has been lost, *Freed From Desire* asks what we can create in its place. It considers how and why spaces of gathering are made, who gets to occupy them and what becomes creatively possible when people come together.