

# DUNCAN CAMPBELL AT CHISENHALE

13 November - 20 December 2009

## PRESS COVERAGE

Date	Publication	Reference
Autumn 2009	Map Magazine	Issue 19 Autumn 2009 p 19
03 November 2010	Film London Artists' Moving Image Network	<a href="http://flamin.filmlondon.org.uk/news/2009/november/duncan_campbell_at_chisenhale_gallery">http://flamin.filmlondon.org.uk/news/2009/november/duncan_campbell_at_chisenhale_gallery</a>
16 November 2009	Telegraph.co.uk	<a href="http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/6580042/Make-It-New-John-by-Duncan-Campbell.html">http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/6580042/Make-It-New-John-by-Duncan-Campbell.html</a>
26 November 2010	Time Out London	<a href="http://www.timeout.com/london/art/event/167068/duncan-campbell">http://www.timeout.com/london/art/event/167068/duncan-campbell</a>
December 2010	Artforum	Mark Webber, 'Top Ten'
30 December 2010	NewStatesman Online	<a href="http://www.newstatesman.com/art/2010/01/british-work-gallery-frieze">http://www.newstatesman.com/art/2010/01/british-work-gallery-frieze</a>
January – February 2010	ArtReview	P103
02 March 2010	The Scotsman	Susan Mansfield, 02 March
Winter 2010	Artforum	Steven Cairns – Best of Year <a href="http://artforum.com/picks/section=bestofyear">http://artforum.com/picks/section=bestofyear</a>

## PRESS REACTION

The story functions as an open-ended parable, a meditation on failure brimming with suggestive parallels to recent events.

### Artforum, January 2010

Through an impressionistic splicing of archive footage, what Campbell in fact achieves is less a portrait of DeLorean

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than a panoramic view of the social iniquities the free market runs on.

**Time Out, November 2009**

The film repeatedly describes impossible aspirations and frustrated expectations. Clichés of narrative and class representation begin to creak at the sides.

**Art Review, December 2009**

REMARKS

**NEW FILMS IN THE MAKING**

*Steven Bode, director of The Film and Video Umbrella discusses the history of the organisation and some upcoming commission.*

“ We have a series of new projects opening across the autumn. Each and every one is a new commission, and each is incredibly different. We are closely involved in all of them (as is usually the case), although in slightly different ways. We are making a new film with Paul Rooney; it's shooting on location this summer and continues a relationship with Paul begun when Film and Video Umbrella commissioned him to make a short single-take piece for our 'Single Shot' project in 2006.

I've always been intrigued by the relationship between visual art and literature (it was a key theme of the *Waterlog* exhibition we commissioned in 2007, which looked at the lingering influence of WG Sebald, not just on contemporary writing but in shaping a sense of place particular to that part of the East of England where Sebald lived and worked). Paul's film began as a loose adaptation of one of Malcolm Lowry's short stories, but over the course of its development it has changed considerably. It still has the Lowry story as its inspiration, but has grown into a completely autonomous piece.

The piece we are developing with Duncan



Campbell, on the other hand, had a different genesis. We were approached by Chisenhale and Tramway, already in discussion with Duncan at that time about an exhibition of new work. Since we joined forces, we've been able to give our collective backing to a much bigger project, which we hope will give Campbell the opportunity to make a significant new piece of work involving a re-construction of a scene from the DeLorean factory in Belfast in the 1980s.

These two films, like the video installation by Suki Chan, 'Sleep Walk, Sleep Talk', an impressionistic study of contemporary London that we are also launching this autumn, are indicative, I think, of the breadth and vitality of film and video practice in the UK. For all the artists we work with, these commissions afford the opportunity to work with a larger production set-up than they have been used to. And though outwardly different from another recent work of ours, 'Balnakeil' by Shona Illingworth, these commissions are vivid evocations of a particular place at a particular pivotal moment.”

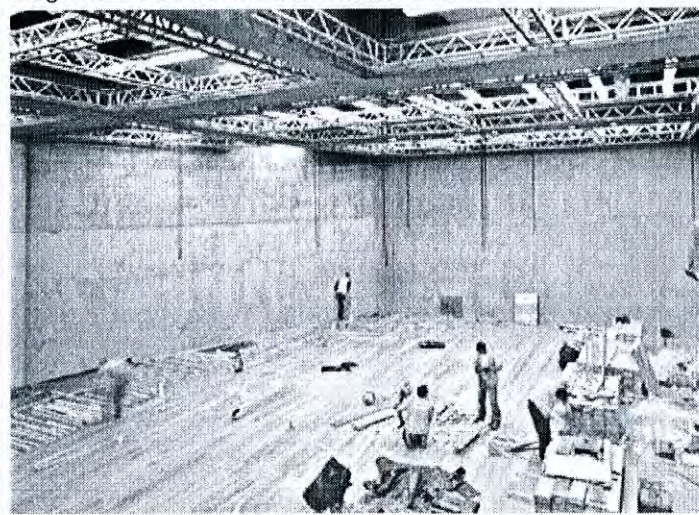
Film and Video Umbrella, full programme on [www.fvu.co.uk](http://www.fvu.co.uk)

**NOTTINGHAM CENTRAL**

*Alex Farquharson, curator of the new Nottingham Contemporary, talks about the highlights of the year ahead and beyond*

“ Nottingham Contemporary opens on 14 November. It is primarily a centre for contemporary art, with four beautiful, large, sky-lit galleries. We also have a performance space, the largest room in the building, with a full light and sound system. We can do anything in there – artistically, educationally, socially. The building is by Caruso St John. At 3000 square metres it is one of the largest public galleries in the UK without a collection. It is built into the sandstone cliff that runs through the centre of Nottingham, and is the only green and gold building I know of. It's a fantastic space for the coming together of artists and audiences of all kinds.

Nottingham Contemporary will be playing a central role in the life of the city. We want and expect a high volume of visitors, most of whom will be new



to contemporary art. They will be drawn there by the building, by our learning programme, by some of the more familiar art, by us having a great café-bar (designed by Matthew Brannon), and simply out of curiosity. We want to be inclusive. At the same time we want Nottingham Contemporary to be a journey, not a reiteration of the status quo. We see art today as an occasion for an unfettered discussion; one that crosses disciplines and social divides; that addresses us as thinking citizens, not simply as consumers.

We open with David Hockney 1960 – 1968 and an exhibition of new and recent work by Frances Stark (which will travel to CCA Glasgow). This will be accompanied by a fortnightly artists-cinema and a 21st century take on the wunderkammer conceived by Pablo Bronstein. Our second exhibition season revisits how the future was experienced under communism. *Star City*, is co-curated by Lukasz Ronduda and is made up of artists such as Pawel Althamer, David Maljkovic, Alexandra Mir and others predominantly from central and east Europe.”

David Hockney 1960-1968 and Frances Stark open 14 November

**Above centre:** DeLorean building, site of Duncan Campbell's reconstruction commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella

**Above:** The performance space at Nottingham Contemporary under construction, 2009

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## News

### November

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#### Duncan Campbell at Chisenhale Gallery

Date posted 03.11.2009

Chisenhale Gallery will premiere a new film by Glasgow-based artist **Duncan Campbell**, who was shortlisted for the inaugural [Jarman Award in 2008](#). The exhibition, which will be Campbell's first major solo public exhibition in London, will run **from 13 November until 20 December**.

Duncan Campbell's latest work, *Make it new John* (2009) tells the story of the DeLorean car, its creator John DeLorean and the workers of the Belfast-based car plant who built it. The film deftly contrasts the DeLorean dream with its spectacular downfall during a critical period in Northern Ireland's history, and the canonisation of the car – the DMC12 – as a symbol of the American myth of mobility.

As with the earlier works such as *Bernadette* (2008) and *Falls Burns Malone Fiddles* (2003), in *Make it new John*, Campbell fuses a documentary aesthetic with fictive moments, using existing archive news and documentary footage from the 1980s as well as new 16mm footage which imagines conversations between DeLorean factory workers.

A number of events have been programmed to run alongside the exhibition, including: on **Saturday 28 November (2pm)**, curator and writer Isobel Harbison leads a tour of the exhibition; on **Thursday 3 December (7pm)**, Richard Kirkland, Professor of Irish literature and culture at King's College London, will discuss the rise and fall of the DeLorean project in the context of Northern Ireland in the 1980s; and on **Sunday 13 December (4pm)**, Duncan Campbell will discuss his new film and recent work with Mark Godfrey, Curator, Tate Modern.

Visit the [Chisenhale Gallery website](#) for more information.

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## Make It New John by Duncan Campbell

Artist Duncan Campbell on his new film about the story behind the DeLorean car, which he describes as “a parody of the American myth of mobility”.

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10:12AM GMT 16 Nov 2009

John DeLorean is best-known for his failed stainless steel futuristic car, which was driven by Michael J Fox in the 1985 film *Back To The Future*.

A new film by artist Duncan Campbell, *Make It New John*, is based on the story of the DeLorean car, and the meteoric rise - and demise - of its maker. Born the son of an immigrant Romanian foundry worker John DeLorean's natural talent for engineering took him to the top of Chevrolet, General Motors most important division.

He persuaded the British Government to back a venture, building a factory in Dunmurry in Belfast to produce a new sports car. Almost as soon as production began in 1981, the factory was beset by financial difficulties and allegations of embezzlement began to surface.

DeLorean's attempts to keep the factory open became increasingly desperate and corrupt and he was eventually arrested by the FBI. The factory, which employed 2000 workers, closed in 1982, having produced just over 9000 cars.

Duncan Campbell's film fuses original footage from the 1980s with re-enactments and documentary-style interviews.

Contrasting the DeLorean dream with its spectacular downfall during a critical period in Northern Ireland's history and the canonisation of the car, Campbell describes the film as “a parody of the American myth of mobility”.

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Duncan Campbell's *Make It New John* is at the Chisenhale Gallery, London 13 November – 20 December 2009, and the Tramway, Glasgow 29 January – 14 March 2010

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RT @davecalhoun: Pleased to see Oscar nominations for Banksy and Mike Leigh. They should...

### Duncan Campbell

This event has now finished **Until Dec 20 2009** [Chisenhale Gallery](#), 64 Chisenhale Rd, London, E3 5QZ [Full details & map](#)

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'Make it new John', 2009

### Time Out says

By **Skye Sherwin**

Posted: Thu Nov 26 2009

A boy's feet hitting the pavement commence the dreams of mobility that hurtle out of control in Duncan Campbell's prescient, if uneven, new film. Nominally, the focus is the dizzying rise and fall of American car designer John DeLorean, who in 1981, with heavy investment from the waning Labour government, opened a factory in Belfast. A year later, thousands were left jobless when DeLorean Motors... [More](#)

### Chisenhale Gallery details

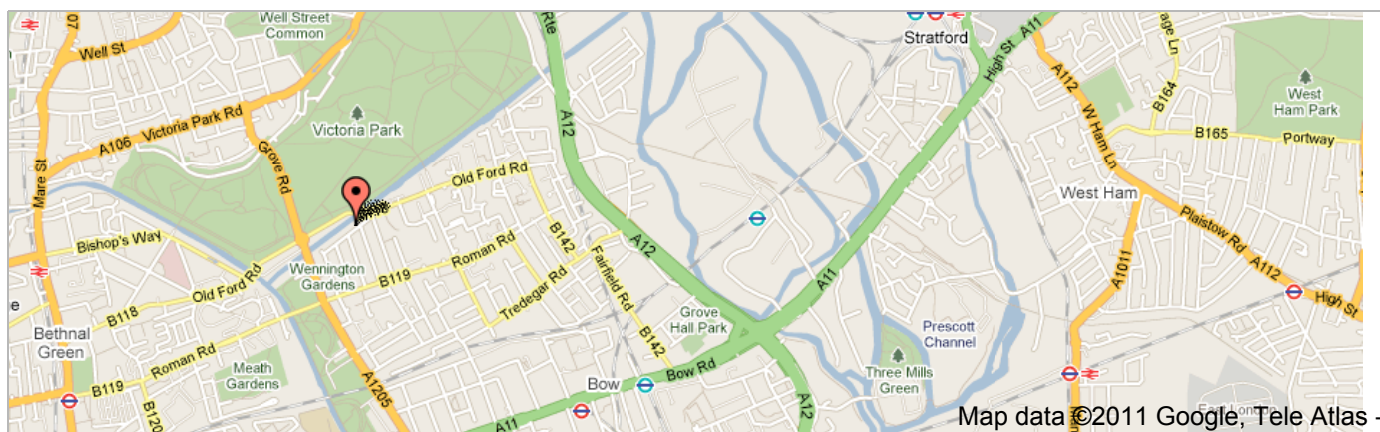
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Transport Mile End

1-6pm Wed-Sun

**Telephone**  
020 8981 4518

<http://www.chisenhale.org.uk>

### Chisenhale Gallery map



Map data ©2011 Google, Tele Atlas -



# Mark Webber

MARK WEBBER IS AN INDEPENDENT CURATOR OF ARTISTS' FILM AND VIDEO, AND A PROGRAM ADVISER TO THE BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL.

**1** *Make it new John* (Duncan Campbell) Seamlessly blending archival footage with newly scripted material, Campbell pushes documentary form in his study of John DeLorean's ill-fated foray

into Northern Ireland and the effect his fall from grace had on the local workforce.

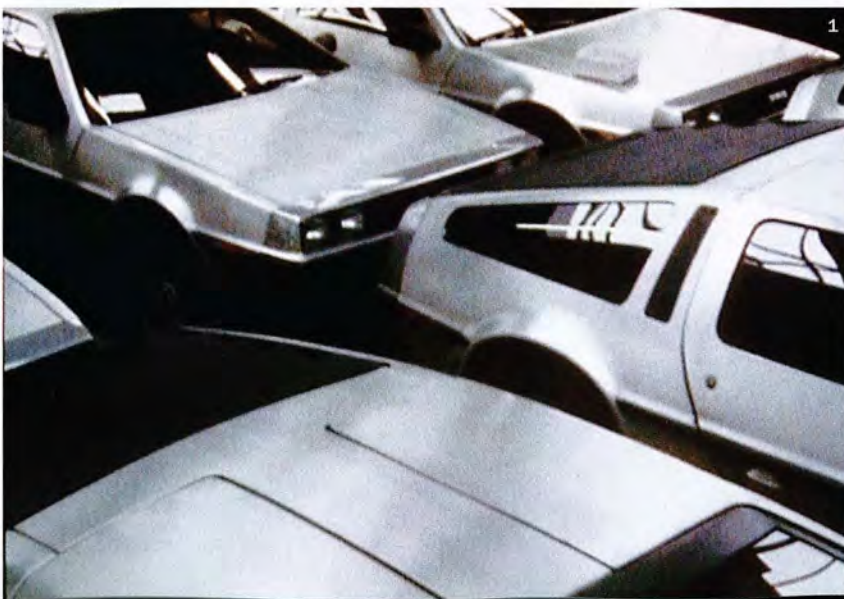
**2** *blue mantle* (Rebecca Meyers) A stately, poetic meditation on the ocean, embracing literary, visual,

and musical representations of its allure and associated dangers.

**3** *Forms Are Not Self-Subsistent Substances* (Samantha Rebello)

Contemplating medieval perception via Aristotelian philosophy, Rebello's unsettling film blends church bells and grotesque stone carvings with bestiary images and animal flesh in abstracted, tactile close-ups.

**4** *Visionary Iraq* (Gabriel Abrantes and Benjamin Crotty) Abrantes's transgressive films pull no punches.



**5** *It, heat, hit* (Laure Prouvost) This new video for Tate Britain's Art Now Lightbox is a sensory overload, featuring direct address, on-screen text, fast cuts, surround sound, and narrative disruption—all delivered with mischievous humor. Passive viewers need not apply.

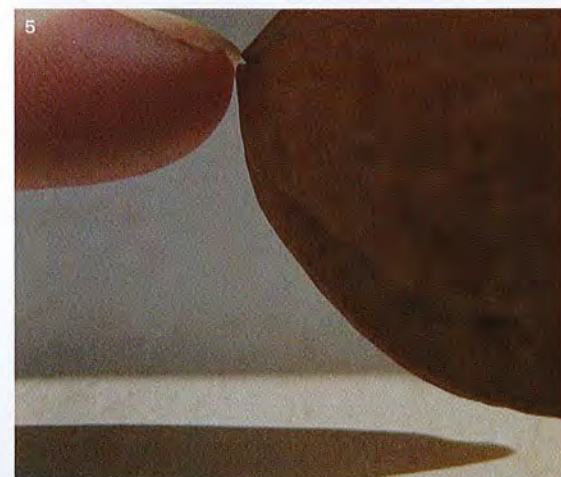
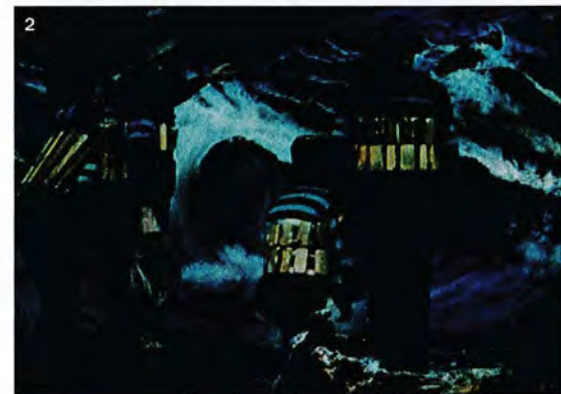
Here, an incestuous brother-sister duo leave their parents to serve in Iraq, in a melodrama acted with beyond-Kuchar excessiveness exacerbated by unnerving, dubbed dialogue.

**6** *Get Out of the Car* (Thom Andersen) In a rejoinder to his monumental *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, Andersen records the temporary sights of his city, accompanied by a rousing SoCal jukebox. Killer comment from a bystander: "When you make a movie about something, call me."

**7** *Brune Renault* (Neil Beloufa) French artist Neil Beloufa's filmmaking is a sculptural practice, in terms of building both sets and viewing situations. In his latest effort, four young actors play out clichéd scenes around a quartered Renault, which allows "impossible" camera movements

while the production process is laid bare.

**8** *Sugar Slim Says* (Lewis Klahr) Klahr shifts up a gear, trading his characteristically nostalgic collage palette for imagery from contemporary graphic novels,



toeing the urban hard line with two knockout, sleazy tunes by Marc Anthony Thompson.

**9** *Journal and Remarks* (David Gatten) Gatten measures a latter-day journey to the Galápagos against Darwin's historic voyage, cutting views of the islands with pages from evolutionary texts at exacting twenty-nine-frame intervals.

**10** *Perfumed Nightmare* (Kidlat Tahimik)

Revived by Ben Rivers for a screening at Whitechapel Gallery in relation to his own forthcoming film *The Other Side of Nowhere*, Filipino filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik's 1977 feature (his first) is an absolute joy to behold. Fresh, insightful, and completely life-affirming—a welcome antidote to the ironic, cynical pastiches that dominate so much contemporary art. □

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# After the frieze

Anna Minton

Published 30 December 2009

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## A new intellectualism is emerging in post-crash British art



On the day Lehman Brothers collapsed in September 2008, the commercial excess of celebrity art peaked as Damien Hirst made history with his £111m-netting Sotheby's auction. A year on, the disappointment that greeted Hirst's latest exhibition of paintings reflected a wider disillusionment with the YBAs (young British artists). Quietly, the energy in British contemporary art is moving away from big money and towards work that is not defined by the market.

A new generation of not-for-profit, independent galleries, in tune with a more critical tradition, is emerging. It is defined by new curators working in collaboration with artists and with each other, in smaller spaces such as Chisenhale Gallery, Studio Voltaire, the Showroom, LUX, Transmission, Gasworks and Cubitt. "There's a different energy around these small places that are not driven by the market," says Ben Cook, director of LUX, an agency for film and video artists.

Chisenhale Gallery, in Mile End, where Polly Staple took over as director last year, and the Showroom, in north-west London, under Emily Pethick, reflect this collaborative, critical and more political way of working. Make it new John, a film by the Glasgow-based artist Duncan Campbell, showed at Chisenhale until late last month. Co-commissioned by several agencies, it charts the spectacular rise and fall of the DeLorean sports car, which was once produced near Belfast, and contextualises it within a critical period in Northern Ireland's recent history.

Staple believes it is the different processes that non-profit-making galleries depend on, operating beyond the market, that are behind much of the critically important new work. Campbell, for example, is represented by a commercial gallery, but would not have been able to produce a film on this scale without the pooled support.

"Non-profit relies on different systems of production and distribution," says Staple. And at the Showroom, Pethick's programme is also supporting work that does not necessarily fit in with the commercial gallery system. "I work in a way which is quite speculative and doesn't depend on a particular outcome," she says, pointing to several current projects based on collective production.

Besides new work, there is a greater emphasis on discursive programmes of talks and events. At Chisenhale Gallery, Staple has launched 21st Century, a research-based programme of talks, film screenings, publication launches and performances, linking in with university programmes and spanning a range of disciplines, including architecture, music, philosophy and critical theory.

Most not-for-profit spaces are publicly funded and, in an uncertain funding climate, with a possible change in government looming, some of the galleries have formed an informal group and are working on a manifesto. Joe Scotland, curator at Studio Voltaire in Clapham, explains: "In the past few months we've been meeting up on a regular basis. We try to share resources and we discuss various issues around funding and how we can work collectively."

Positioning the group, Staple points to a more intellectual, European direction. "We recognise that what we do is quite specialised. It's about critical thinking and about presenting ideas of difference," she says. "This is a post-Blair moment, where we can see the world is tough and difficult and we're not on a hell-bent consumerist



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# Steven Cairns

## Duncan Campbell, 6th Berlin Biennale, Richard Hamilton

ARTFORUM, WINTER 2010

Artists Space's presentation in March of **Duncan Campbell's** *Make it New John*, 2009, gave a further twist to his fifty-five-minute film, which I had previously seen at two of the institutions that had commissioned the work: Chisenhale, London and Tramway, Glasgow. Alongside the film, which centers on the ill-fated DeLorean DMC-12 and the Northern Irish political landscape that facilitated the luxury cars' production, was a vast collection of early-1980s, DeLorean-related printed matter that amplified the film's nostalgic contexts and further tested viewers' resilience to aesthetic seduction.



Duncan Campbell, *Make it New John*, 2009, still from a 16-mm film. 51 minutes.

Despite the challenging structure of **Kathrin Rhomberg's 6th Berlin Biennale** and the often-abstruse combinations of works on view, I continued to question (long after it had closed this autumn) what, in fact, I had found so challenging. Highlights of the modest forty-three-artist show included Henrik Olesen's dismantled and archived Powerbook G4, wittily titled, *I do not go to work today. I don't think I go tomorrow/Machine Assemblage I-II*, 2010, and Phil Collins's *marxism today (prologue)*, 2010, which dug into a history surprisingly absent elsewhere in the exhibition. Spread over six disparate locations, the biennial situated itself within Berlin's current socio-political contexts—a contrast to previous editions, which have emphasized Berlin-centric themes through the choice of works.

In London, a solo show at the Serpentine Gallery reaffirmed the significance of **Richard Hamilton's** career. While his recent works didn't pack the same punch as his celebrated works from the '60s, '70s, and the '80s, they acted as points of reference in an enduring practice that has consistently proven itself in tune with the contemporary zeitgeist. What was most shocking here was that the humanity so effortlessly captured in works from his back catalogue still resonates today.

— Steven Cairns

# Future that never came

Duncan Campbell's take on the DeLorean story offers new insight into a project that promised the world then failed



Susan Mansfield

**DUNCAN CAMPBELL: MAKE IT NEW JOHN**  
TRAMWAY, GLASGOW  
★★★★☆

**DOCUMENTALIST**  
COLLECTIVE GALLERY, EDINBURGH  
★★★★☆

A LOT has happened since a winsomely boyish Michael J Fox was transported back in time in a customised DeLorean sports car in *Back to the Future*. When the film

came out in 1985, the DeLorean, with its futuristic form and distinctive gull-wing doors, was already confined to the past.

Everything about the DeLorean was visionary, from the ambitious attempt to design a car from first principles, to the decision to build it in an area of high unemployment in Dunmurry, Northern Ireland, uniting Protestant and Catholic workforces. Yet, within two years of the first models rolling off the shiny new production lines in 1981, poor performance, a lack of orders and the withdrawal of public funding had caused the factory to close, with the loss of 2,000 jobs.

The swiftness of John DeLorean's journey from visionary beginnings to commercial failure seems inherently cinematic, and it feels like ideal material for Dublin-born, Glasgow-based artist Duncan Campbell, who is gaining a growing reputation as a film-maker. As with his earlier film, *Bernadette*, about young Northern Irish socialist Bernadette Devlin, he manages to hold up a mirror to the way in which stories are told, while still managing to tell a compelling story.

*Make it new John* is the first time his work has been shown at a major venue in Scotland and, as such, is long overdue. However, though he undoubtedly merits a show in a space like Tramway 2, and no-one is arguing with its cinematic proportions, the vast (and, in this weather, extremely chilly) room does feel like overkill for a medium-sized screen and half a dozen benches.

The 50-minute film, commissioned by Tramway, Film and Video Umbrella, Chisenhale, and the Model, Sligo, unfolds in three movements. The first, jaunty and Technicolor, swept along by Beach Boys-esque music, has to do with the world that gave birth to the DeLorean dream: a vision of neat 1950s houses and futuristic multi-lane highways, men on surfboards, women in bikinis, a place in which the car was integral to freedom and prosperity.

The DeLorean DMC12 was, briefly, the ultimate expression of this vision. Billboards invited the citizens of the early 1980s to "live the dream". The second part of the film tells the story through footage from television, film and private archives. Campbell seeks



*Make it new John* is the first time Campbell's work has been shown at a major venue in Scotland

out the behind-the-scenes moments which humanise: a cleaner vacuuming the carpet in front of the training centre before a visit from the boss; a young executive bumping his head on a gull-wing door.

The montage brings home just how quickly the story unfolded: mass recruitment sessions, gleaming assembly lines and beaming politicians quickly giving way to rumours of imminent financial collapse and a tight-lipped Ted Heath sealing the car plant's fate.

We are forced to consider who knew the truth, and when: the Beverly Hills car dealers bragging about how many they could sell; the worried workforce threatening to occupy the factory and fight for their jobs; even steely-eyed John DeLorean, determined to stay on-message while clutching his boarding pass for Concorde.

Various theories are put forward in the film for why the project failed, but no answers are given. This is not what Campbell is about. The final section of the film which - unusually for him - is

**We are left in no doubt that, more than politics and big business, this is a story about individual lives**

scripted and filmed using actors, brings the impact of the failure right back to the personal.

A group of redundant DeLorean workers round a table at a drop-in centre are by turns angry and resigned. One by one, they leave the table to take phone calls or make tea until just one man is left, a middle-aged man called John, uncomfortable in the glare of the camera and the interviewer's questions, reluctantly admitting that he sees no prospects for his future.

It's a daring way to end the film, to focus on a single human story.

Whether it succeeds in bringing us back to look with sympathy at John DeLorean himself, a man of similar age, who eventually filed for bankruptcy in 1999, is not a given. But we are left in no doubt that, more than politics and big business, this is a story about individual lives.

There is a similarly thoughtful revisiting of the past by Lithuanian artist Deimantas Narkevicius, one of the three artists in the Collective Gallery's current show, *Documentalist*. He explores his interest in his country's Communist and post-Communist history through the lens of *Solaris*, Andrei Tarkovsky's iconic science-fiction film.

He films actor Donatas Banionis (Kris Kelvin) returning to the story after more than 40 years, a strong, serious face which can still carry a film. Narkevicius makes use of lines from the last section of Stanislaw Lem's novel, on which the film was based, but his evocative use of settings - dreary, bureaucratic Communist era interiors, abandoned institutional corridors, snowy vista of rivers and apartment blocks - takes it beyond this to a visual essay in recent history, another example of futuristic visions giving way to a rather different reality.

The artists in *Documentalist* all "explore blurred boundaries between fiction and reality", though it could be argued that all art does this to some extent. Suzanne Treister does so very clearly by reworking newspaper front pages - *Die Welt*, *Le Monde*, *New York Times* - into mysterious, alchemical ink drawings.

The original material is still there - Clinton vs Obama, the dreary outlook for Iraq - but the straight columns of text and photographs become twisted into mysterious new forms, like home-made spells, pointing alluding to unseen forces which drive world events.

Chris Evans' works, a playful sculpture and a geometric design painted on a wooden slatted blind, are more difficult. They are made in response to interviews with elderly Italian politicians, which is interesting, but you wouldn't know it unless someone told you. In the same way, his film, *The School of Improvement*, is beautifully shot in after-hours classrooms, but its coyness about what it's really driving at makes it hard to engage with.

● *Make it new John* runs until 14 March, *Documentalist* until 28 March.