

## About the Artist

John Newling was born in Birmingham, England in 1952. He spent his earliest years in Handsworth, an inner city area of Birmingham. As a child, he was a frequent visitor of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, an institution dating back to 1885. Newling graduated in 1974 from North Staffordshire Polytechnic where he received honors in Fine Arts. He received a Masters in Sculpture from Chelsea School of Art in 1975, and a Master of Philosophy degree from Wolverhampton Polytechnic in 1978. In 1984, he was awarded the first Fulbright Fellow in the Visual Arts. In 1994, he was the artist-in-residence at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. Newling currently resides in Nottingham, England and is a professor of installation sculpture at Nottingham Trent University.

## Other John Newling projects

*Chatham Vines*, 2004-06

The Old Church at Chatham

This ambitious project entitled *Chatham Vines* was begun in 2004. The first stage of this work involved building and installing a hydroponic vineyard within a redundant church in Chatham. The artist plan is to be able to grow enough grapes to produce red wine from this source by the summer of 2006. The project, curated by Kelly Carmichael, has been made in collaboration with Ai and Esoteric Hydroponics. Chatham Vines was commissioned by Medway Regeneration, and the project received funding from the Arts Council.

*Currency and Belief*, 2002-03

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

*Currency and Belief*, represents the culmination of several years of work, and continues the artist's exploration of the parallels between material and spiritual values. Newling has engineered a number of sculptures that subtly rebuffs our society's obsession with proof while suggesting that value can be attributed and understood in many ways. In *Lottery*, Newling places a lottery machine in front of a reproduction of Quentin Metsys' *The Money Changer and his Wife*, 1514, to highlight the contrast between riches on earth versus those promised in heaven. In the painting the man is weighing coins while his wife turns the pages of a Bible. Newling's machine generated five numbers daily that were taped to the painting to represent the untold number of attempts people have made to become wealth by gambling what they have.

*Stamping Uncertainty*, April 2004

The Chapter House, Canterbury Cathedral

*Stamping Uncertainty* explored the nature of doubt and the struggle for faith expressed in the Church's hymn book. Hymns are traditionally seen as proclamations of religious certainty, a vocal manifestation of complete faith. Newling, however, concentrated on the surprising number of questions and doubts within them - editing the hymn book to only the hymn numbers, authors' names and these questions.

152 lecterns made from ash wood were arranged in rows. On each lectern were a rubber stamp, ink pad and a book containing one page with a question from one hymn stamped upon it. Stamping is seen as an expression of bureaucratic certainty, an absolute truth, thus, by subverting this idea, Newling has succinctly created a metaphor for two thousand years of spiritual doubt. Walking through this immense field of lecterns is to experience a physical, as well as emotional and spiritual sensation of walking through uncertainty.



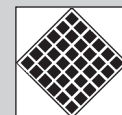
*Mine (x)*, 2005

## Acknowledgments

We are pleased to present, **John Newling: British Conceptual Artist**, a premiere exhibition of new work by John Newling. The mixed-media installation, *Mine*, 2005, was designed specifically for the Haggerty Museum of Art and marks Newling's debut exhibition in the United States.

I would like to express special thanks to John Newling for fabricating a new piece for the museum. This exhibition would not have been possible without his cooperation and involvement. Special thanks to our exhibition sponsors. This exhibition is supported in part by the British Council, Mrs. Ray Smith Jr. Endowment Fund and the Wisconsin Arts Board.

Curtis L. Carter, Director



**Haggerty Museum of Art**  
**Marquette University**  
**13th and Clybourn Streets**  
**Milwaukee, WI**

**Museum hours:**  
**Monday-Saturday, 10-4:30;**  
**Thursday, 10-8**  
**Sunday, noon-5.**

**Free Admission Daily**

**Free parking in the Mary B. Finnigan Parking Lot adjacent to Marquette Lot J, entered from 11th St., one block south of Wisconsin Ave. Additional parking in Parking Structure 2 on the corner of 12th St. and Wells.**

[www.marquette.edu/haggerty](http://www.marquette.edu/haggerty)

# HAGGERTY MUSEUM of ART

## MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

## John Newling

### British Conceptual Artist



## mixed media installation

June 2 - August 28, 2005

The exhibition, **John Newling: British Conceptual Artist**, features a new mixed-media installation by the internationally known British artist John Newling. Newling's installation, *Mine*, 2005, was created specifically for the Haggerty Museum of Art. The five calves are made of resin and foam double gilded in 24-karat gold and are branded on both sides with the word 'mine'. Each calf stands on a plinth and brushed aluminum tray etched with a mathematical sign identifying the work. A shelf with various objects, such as the rubber stamps used to brand each calf, accompanies each work.

For his installation, the artist drew inspiration from Samuel A. Maverick (1803-1870), the Texan cattle owner who neglected to brand his cattle. Before long, the calves that roamed the areas were referred to as 'mavericks' and the word 'maverick' became associated with a person of independent or unorthodox views. By branding the calves in the exhibition, the artist introduces the notion of ownership and control. According to the artist the golden calf is a commodity and an iconic symbol. The biblical connotations of the golden calf (Exodus: 32) reinforce the artist's ideas of ownership, faith, materiality and freedom.

*Mine* is designed to invite reflection and contemplation on a variety of ideas. For the artist, the relationship between the ideas inherent in the work, the visceral quality of the work, its location at the Haggerty Museum of Art, and the people that visit it are the essential components of the work.





Mine (+), 2005

## Mine by John Newling

The thoughts underpinning this installation continue a series of works and texts that look at currency and belief as a generator of perceived meaning. For a series of works titled *Currency and Belief* I had been looking at ideas to do with transaction and exchange. I looked at the way that stamping a name or sign into metal to form a coin could ascribe value. These inscriptions identify the metal itself as symbolic in the transaction. The act of stamping onto the metal denotes the value we will then give it. This is a kind of branding.

When working on *mine* I was continuing to question ideas of Value in terms of Self. I looked particularly at the life and function of large institutions like banks, universities, hospitals and social services. I looked at the value ascribed to role of the maverick within an institution and questioned the manner in which corporate decisions are made based on the collection of data.

Data collection is frequently achieved by means of a questioning pro-forma. That is to say, the information is organized as it is gathered under specific categories. This means that only information that fits into a category can count. Anything else is rejected at the outset. The use of a management pro-forma to set the question will therefore dictate many of the answers and much of the outcome. Where then do we hear the maverick voice?

The word 'maverick' comes from Samuel A. Maverick who, it was said, neglected to brand his cattle. This was an important point. Companies fencing the land curtailed open range cattle management. Investment companies could extend the cattle brand to the company brand. Unbranded cattle could not easily be attributed to an owner and the practice was outlawed.

*"The situation of Samuel Maverick's neglect in branding his cattle, lends itself to key aspects of institutional agreements; the relationship of brand to maverick. As with the character of Bret Maverick in the television series, maverick, as a noun, is generally associated with a person of independent or unorthodox views."*

From: *Transactions and Agreements*.



Mine (+), 2005

A gilded calf is an iconic symbol. A gilded calf with the word 'mine' branded on it extends the symbol by moving it towards our view of Self and consequently our view of the relationship of Self to meaning. We have lost faith in many ideologies and are left struggling to understand the 'what' and 'why' of 'who we are'. In a culture mediated by audit and celebrity the struggle to grasp a sense of Self has become in danger of being institutionalized. Our idea of Self becomes distorted by the way we ascribe value. Value itself can be seen in this manner as a kind of idolatry.

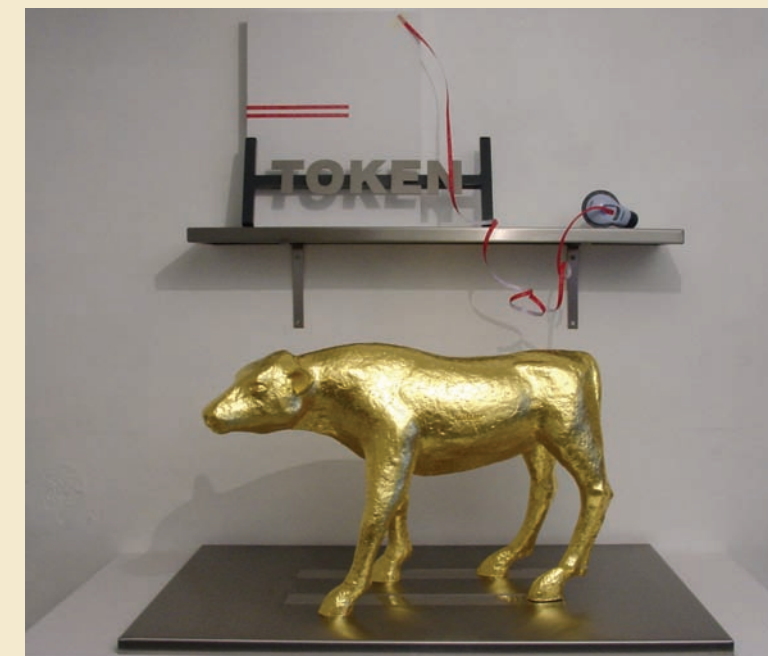
The installation for the Haggerty consists of five gilded calves each bearing the word 'mine' indented into its side like a brand. Each calf, double gilded in 24ct English gold, stands on a stainless steel base. Cut into each base are the five principle mathematical signs of 'multiply', 'minus', 'equals', 'plus' and 'divide'.

In conjunction with each calf are objects that encourage a reflection upon our views of ownership, faith, materiality, uncertainty and freedom because of the relationship between the gilded calves and their accompanying mathematical signs. On the wall immediately behind each calf is a shelf on which stand objects that form meanings between the calf, the word 'mine' and the action implied by the mathematical sign.

So, *Mine (+)* has rubber stamps, made from the original brand used on the calf, placed along the length of the shelf; *Mine (x)* has cast sections of the calf prior to gilding installed on the shelf; *Mine (÷)* is accompanied by a reproduction of *The Money Changer and His Wife* by Quentin Metsys; *Mine (=)* has references to mapping and naming territories; *Mine (-)* has scales, symbolic of equilibrium. These notes are intended only as a guide. The meaning lies within the viewer.

*"It is clear that we recognise events and data in different ways. To talk of truth, as an agreed transaction, known by all and experienced by all in an identical manner is folly. If the participants in an agreement lose trust then the agreement has to be negotiated and re-negotiated endlessly. Each text or event is taken through forensic analysis as different views are brought in. Without trust it is unlikely that an agreement will be sustainable. Trust allows us the space to build our own understanding of data in relation to our knowledge of events and to do so in a manner that avoids any resulting agreement being trapped in its own empiricism. Without such a space the map will become the territory. Verbs become nouns."*

From: *Transactions and Agreements*.



Mine (=), 2005