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John Hansard Gallery
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Free Admission
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Notes to Editors:

John Hansard Gallery, based at the University of Southampton's Highfield campus, is one of Britain's leading public galleries of contemporary visual art. Committed to excellence and innovation, the Gallery plays a key role in the cultural life of the campus and the city, drawing a wide local, national and international audience to its exhibitions and events. The Gallery's highly regarded programme by British and international artists regularly tours throughout the UK and overseas.

John Hansard Gallery is part of the **University of Southampton** and financially supported by **Arts Council England**.

John Hansard Gallery

Press Release

English Anxieties

Tim Brennan

7 July – 29 August 2009

Tim Brennan's *English Anxieties* explores the archive of Mass Observation (MO). Founded in 1937, MO used a team of trained observers and volunteer writers to gather information concerning everyday life in Britain. Though considered progressive in giving a voice to ordinary people, for some, MO was perceived as an intrusion based on concealed methods of recording social behaviour.

Brennan's encounter with the MO archive combines an artist's book, vinyl drawings, original archival material and the re-working of a fascinating account by British explorer and archaeologist T.C. Lethbridge of a concealed enemy presence in Cambridgeshire. Taking descriptions and drawings made by Lethbridge as a starting point, Brennan represents this data in the form of large, colourful maps inspired by the Isotype graphical system developed in the 1930s.

English Anxieties' second theme revolves around the work of the Ashington Miners, whose exhibition *Unprofessional Painting* was shown in London during the 1940s. Here, Brennan presents MO archival material in the form of a dismantled artist's book.

Tim Brennan has exhibited widely both in Britain and internationally over the last twenty years. His approach incorporates disciplines such as history, architecture and geography, resulting in exhibitions, performances, writings and publications.

Commissioned by Ffotogallery and Photoworks, in association with the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex and the European Centre for Photographic Research at the University of Wales, Newport. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Arts Council England and Arts Council Wales.



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