

## Biography

Born 1966 in San Francisco, McGee received his BFA in painting and printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1991. He has exhibited internationally including at the Watarium, Tokyo; Liverpool Biennial; Museum Het Domein, Sittard; Prada Foundation, Milan; Deste Foundation, Athens; 2001 Venice Biennale; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. McGee lives and works in San Francisco.

## Further Information

To find out more about Barry McGee and our other exhibitions visit BALTIC Library & Archive online database <http://archive.balticmill.com>

The database contains over 100 films and audio files documenting the artists and their work.

## Free Daily Guided Tours

From Monday 4 February this exhibition will be included in the Daily Guided Tours at 11.00 and 16.00, meeting at the Information Desk, Ground Floor. No booking required.

## BALTIC Podcasts

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# BARRY McGEE

*They Don't Make This Anymore*

21 January – 27 April 2008

**BALTIC**  
[www.balticmill.com](http://www.balticmill.com)

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## BARRY MCGEE

### *They Don't Make This Anymore*

21 January – 27 April 2008

Barry McGee presents his first major UK solo exhibition at BALTIC. The exhibition includes a re-interpretation of existing works alongside new commissions in a site-specific installation.

Since the mid 1980s McGee has worked on the streets of his native San Francisco using the graffiti tagging moniker 'Twist'. He has worked to shift our focus from the enticements of mass media consumer culture and the subversive power of billboard advertising. With the direct, human communication of graffiti he asserts a place in his surroundings and questions the privatisation of public space.

McGee sees graffiti as a pure expression of the American Dream. As he explains: *"The American Dream has nothing to do with criminality, but with a desire for independence and adventure, so escaping from any kind of control or definition also signifies not being identified, acting illegally, standing outside of every category of art and intervention on the streets."*

In recent years McGee has become more active in a conventional art gallery context. Taking a "do-it-yourself" independent, creative approach, he is driven by the spontaneity and immediacy of graffiti culture. Referencing familiar features of the urban landscape, McGee captures the boredom, failure and melancholy of urban life with humour. He draws on many influences including art activism, performance, graffiti art of the seventies and eighties, the Mexican muralists, the lyric flow of the San Francisco beat poets, punk and hardcore music, traditional sign writers, American folk culture, tramps, transients and drunks.

McGee is perhaps best known for his site-specific wall paintings featuring satirical figurative imagery, text, floating heads and graffiti tags. Using discarded materials, his work highlights an ambivalent relationship toward consumerism, with a sense of nostalgia for handmade forms of communication. He creates installations that echo the detritus of city excess including seemingly disordered and chaotic clusters of elements including wood, metal, paint, found objects, animatronics, destroyed surfaces, animation, flickering screens, photos and hundreds of 'tape' paintings.

At BALTIC, McGee's very personal response to the mass-produced brings the elements of his varied working practices together; in doing so this exhibition challenges boundaries, and embodies what has made him one of the most respected graffiti artists to continue working since the early 1980s.

This installation would not be possible without the tireless assistance of Kevin Ancell, Oliver Beck, Peter Evans, Jesse Geller, Josh Lazcano and Phil Wyness.

*Untitled (Bottles)* 2004. Copyright the artist. Courtesy of Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London and Deitch Projects, New York.



Courtesy of the artist and Redcat

