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03/03/11—02/04/11

John Smith

The world seems a long way away

Pallas Projects presents UK film and video artist John Smith, in his first solo exhibition in Ireland. *The world seems a long way away* is a survey of selected films from the 1970s to the present. The title, paraphrased from the film *Slow Glass*, operates here as comment on the overlapping notions present within his formalist/conceptual/narrative cinema – 'inventively documented and probed [...] immediate surroundings' – while keeping a singular eye on the gap between what is attainable via these processes: the impossibility of truly knowing his shifting subjects, the streets, houses and people that are portrayed over decades of filming and editing, and the impetus contained therein.

The exhibition contains in the first programme four key works filmed on 16mm between 1976 and 1996, beginning with the seminal *The Girl Chewing Gum* shot in black and white on a grey day in Hackney, through to the lyrical *Blight*, revolving around the building of the M11 Link Road in East London and the bitter campaign by local residents to protect their homes from demolition, and made in collaboration with the composer Jocelyn Pook. The second programme is devoted to *Hotel Diaries*. A series of eight video works made between 2001–7, it charts the 'War on Terror' era of Bush and Blair through a series of recordings that relate personal experiences to the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Beginning with *Frozen War*, filmed in the Irish city of Cork, it traverses Germany, Switzerland, England, The Netherlands and Palestine, ending with *Six Years Later* in the city of Cork once again.

John Smith was born in Walthamstow, East London in 1952 and studied film at the Royal College of Art. Strongly influenced by the Structural Materialist ideas that dominated British artists' filmmaking during his formative years, but also fascinated by the immersive power of narrative and the spoken word, he has developed a body of work that deftly subverts the perceived boundaries between documentary and fiction, representation and abstraction. Smith's meticulously crafted films rework and transform reality, exploring and exposing the language of cinema.

John Smith lives and works in London. He teaches part-time at the University of East London where he is Professor of Fine Art. He is represented by Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin. Solo exhibitions include Royal College of Art Galleries, London (2010), Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin (2010), Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2006), Kunstmuseum Magdeburg (2005). Major group shows include Berlin Biennial (2010), 'The Talent Show', Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and MoMA PS1, New York (2010), Venice Biennale (2007), 'A Century of Artists' Film in Britain', Tate Britain (2004), 'Live in Your Head: Concept and Experiment in Britain 1965–75', Whitechapel Gallery, London (2000) and 'The British Art Show' (1984).

www.johnsmithfilms.com

In the process, he makes us look more closely, not just at his films and the cinema generally, but our own surroundings, the everyday world that engulfs us but that we probably routinely dismiss as a suitable subject for contemplation, art and imagination.
—Adrian Danks, *Senses of Cinema*

Curators note: Each exhibition at Pallas Projects will be forwarded by an artwork element, or text, by or about the artist. In this instance we are reprinting Adrian Danks' Essay 'On the Street where You Live: The Films of John Smith' from *Senses of Cinema*. *Senses of Cinema* is a valuable online resource for film discourse (see www.sensesofcinema.com) – reprinted with kind permission.

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The exhibition features two 90-minute programmes, each shown four times-a-day beginning at 12 noon, 1.30pm, 3.00pm & 4.30pm

Programme 1 (Front Gallery)

The Girl Chewing Gum, 1976
12 mins. B/W. Sound. 16 mm

The Black Tower, 1985–7
24 mins. Colour. Sound. 16 mm

Slow Glass, 1988–91
40 mins. Colour. Sound. 16 mm

Blight, 1994–96
14mins. Colour. Sound.
16 mm & video

Programme 2 (Rear Gallery)

Hotel Diaries (series), 2001–7
82 mins. Colour. Sound. Video.

Featuring:

Frozen War
Ireland, October 8th 2001.
11 mins

Museum Piece
Germany, October 14th 2004.
12 mins

Throwing Stones
Switzerland, November 13th 2004.
11 mins

B & B
UK, November 26th 2005.
6 mins

Pyramids / Skunk
Netherlands, January 29th 2006
& January 29th 2007. 16 mins

Dirty Pictures
Palestine, April 15th & 16th 2007.
14 mins

Six Years Later
Ireland, October 20th 2007.
9 mins

John Smith in conversation with Maeve Connolly, hosted by The LAB, this artist's talk will take place at 2pm on Thursday 3rd March at The LAB, Foley Street, Dublin 1, in conjunction with IADT's MA in Visual Arts Practices. Places are limited, to book please contact – victoria.kearney@dublincity.ie

the LAB

MA VIS iadt DUN LAOGHAIRE

MA IN VISUAL ARTS PRACTICES
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Pallas Projects/Studios is a not-for-profit initiative run by artists Mark Cullen and Gavin Murphy, active for fifteen years in Dublin's city centre. Pallas Projects continues to collaborate with leading peers to engage and develop current Irish contemporary art, through a continued commitment to solo projects by Irish and international artists, alongside occasional thematic group exhibitions, and initiated exchanges with artists' groups around Ireland and abroad.

Listings Information:
Preview: 7pm – 9pm Wednesday 2nd March 2011
Dates: 3rd March – 2nd April 2011
Venue: Pallas Projects – 23 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1
Days: Thursday – Saturday, 12 – 6pm
www.pallasprojects.org | info@pallasprojects.org

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