

MUMMERY+SCHNELLE

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PRESS RELEASE

Andrew Cross *The Solo*

12-15 January 2011

Over four days in January, Mummery + Schnelle will be screening Andrew Cross's new film *The Solo*, made with 70s rock drumming legend Carl Palmer. This will be the first opportunity in London to see this new work after its highly successful premiere at Birmingham's Ikon Eastside during the summer of 2010.

During *The Solo*'s 35 minutes duration - presented in the gallery as a two-screen projection - Palmer performs separate drumming sequences exploring every facet of an absorbing relationship between drummer and drum kit. In stark contradiction to the fashionable maligning of the 'drum solo', the combination of Cross's rigorously minimal filmmaking and Palmer's aptitude, outstanding co-ordination and sheer strength makes for compelling viewing. As critic Martin Herbert suggests, with *The Solo*, Cross makes Palmer "a serious proposition, not a punchline". Herbert also writes "Time is mobilised weirdly in Andrew Cross's art" where the subjects of his videos and photographs "feel wedded to the past but situate one in the present."* Indeed, Cross consciously confounds any desire to measure the then with the now, the old with the new or the inevitable 'un-hip' with the 'cool'. He does so with exacting precision by dissecting video's formal equivalents: fast and slow, absence and presence, exciting and boring.

To coincide with *The Solo*, Cross will be presenting two bodies of photographic work at the gallery. One, *Hats Off To Roy Harper*, is a series of fifteen images that document an empty corner of Knebworth Park and were taken on the anniversary of Led Zeppelin's final UK performance on that exact spot. In the absence of the spectacle, and armed only with his memory and his camera, Cross scrutinised what remained of the event thirty years later – the subtle changes in cloud formation and light. Architect Adrian Friend has observed that Cross's work celebrates the subject without resorting to literal visual metaphors. "The subject is omni-present by its absence. The deliberate omission literally burns the retina".*

The second body of work, being presented for the first time, is a portfolio of photographs that also form an investigation into memory and place; in this case the environment of Cross's childhood - the all-at-once pastoral, militaristic, and mythological landscape of Salisbury Plain, a large area of which his father farmed throughout the 1960s. Juxtaposing photographs made by his father when Cross was a very young child with his own made during the past three years after revisiting the same locations, this body of work constitutes a search for something that is at the same time all pervasive and no longer there.

Without sentimentality, Cross asks highly considered questions about time and place and their connection to identity. In his work, rural landscape, the eclectic meanderings of 1970s prog-rock festivals and motorway journeys, are all features of a particular English history and therefore subject to considerable shifts in cultural value. In an apparently accelerated and fractured world it is not only the nature of these shifts that Cross draws his attention to, but also the changing value of practice, whether found in agriculture, visual art or, indeed, rock musicianship.

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Andrew Cross began working as an artist in 2000 after establishing a successful career as a curator. Working in photography and film he explores subjects close to his lifelong interests: memory and place, travel and the machines of transit, music. He has also published books, including *Some Trains in America* with Prestel [2002]; *Along Some American Highways* with Black Dog Publishing [2003] and *An English Journey* in collaboration with Film and Video Umbrella and John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton [2004]. Solo exhibitions and screenings of his work include *Some Trains in America* at the Barbican Centre, London [2002]; *An English Journey* at John Hansard Gallery, Southampton [2004], Rugby Art Gallery & Museum and Castlefield Gallery, Manchester [2005]; *Passage* at the Foundling Museum, London [2007] and Turner Contemporary, Margate [2008]; *Passing Time* at George Eastman House, Rochester USA; *The Solo*, at Ikon Eastside, Birmingham. His work was short-listed for the Beck's Futures Prize in 2004. For further information, please visit www.andrewcross.co.uk

The Solo. Screening times

At Mummery + Schnelle from 12-15 January there will be five screenings of *The Solo* each day at 12pm, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm and 4pm.

On Thursday 13 January at 7pm there will be an additional screening of *The Solo* at the Cockpit Theatre. Following this screening Andrew Cross will be in conversation with Carl Palmer about working together on the making of the film. This event is free, but booking is essential. To reserve a place at this event, please contact: Cockpit Theatre, Gateforth Street, London NW8 8EH. T: 020 7258 2925. www.cockpittheatre.org.uk

* Martin Herbert: *Andrew Cross The Solo*. In Art Review issue 43 / September 2010

* Adrian Friend: *The Solo*, Blueprint Magazine Online, 21 July 2010.
(<http://www.blueprintmagazine.co.uk/index.php/everything-else/the-solo-by-andrew-cross/>)