

William Pope.L

CHILD

Launch: 7-9pm Friday 16 September 2011
17 September – 5 November 2011

"I am thinking of a surrealist Western, very spare, very noir at times, quotidian at others. A man 'with a reputation', shows up at a town, goes into a bar, and runs into another man, a younger man (maybe a woman dressed as a man). The older man calls the younger man his child. He buys the younger man a drink." Pope.L, May 2011

Child is a new major three screen video commission and film-set installation in the main gallery at Eastside Projects by Chicago based William Pope.L, the self dubbed 'Friendliest Black Artist in America'.

The state of being a child is one of minority, lesser rights and the challenges of social development. When a child reaches the age of majority they cease to legally be considered children and must assume control over their persons, actions, and decisions. The legal control and legal responsibilities of their parents or guardian over and for them are terminated at this chronological point. The age of majority varies from 15-21. In England, like the vast majority of Countries, it is 18.

William Pope.L's art involves a multiplicity of approaches centred around performance. Often placing his artistic identity in the context of his stateside home Pope.L has a history of engaging with accepted, clichéd and charged cultural motifs, frequently challenging established thoughts on racial difference and 'blackness'. America's concerns with 'difference' are not the same as Britain's though, and Pope.L has produced the script, casting and sets accordingly, against the backdrop of Birmingham, filming in both the gallery and across the locality of Digbeth.

Choosing to examine the common signifiers of the broken home Pope.L has put aside the oversized phalluses, Superman costumes, mayonnaise, milk and Wall St. Journals of previous works and mined the visual identifiers and sites of the dysfunctional family and the 'castle' of the lone estranged father – the pub.

The installation works as a journey through the sets of the film, requiring the spectator to 'seek out' successive sections of the story, mirroring the journey from bar to bar, pub to pub, within the story.

Child' seeks to create an atmosphere of melodrama, strangeness and oddness informed by the artist's background in theatre and performance art. The exhibition draws upon the existing context of the gallery and its surroundings combining with cinematic references ranging from the father of the French Nouvelle Vague, Jean-Pierre Melville to the explicit theatrical trickery of Hans-Jurgen Syberberg's, who both have a theatrical sense of space and extended duration.

With both humorously and terrifyingly larger-than-life characters, Child gives exposure to a character's alternating thoughts and feelings. What constitutes the ideal family? What do they truly need to make them happy? Marriage? Partnership? Children? Unity? Honesty?

Child is an epic artwork about a small troubled family, coping with the long absence and return of the father. Pope.L continues to construct surprising and unique work around the dispersion and coalescing of matter, values and concepts of what it means to be alive.

William Pope.L (b.1955, New Jersey, USA. Lives and works in Chicago.) has been making multi-disciplinary works since the 1970s, and has exhibited internationally. In 2009 he was commissioned by Hauser & Wirth to create an installation in response to Kaprow's "Yard", and participated in the New Museum's "The Last Newspaper" 2010-11 with a reenactment of his infamous "Eating the Wall Street Journal" performance.

Artist's Print Edition: Sisters 2011

Box set of 11 double sided A2 prints, edition of 10, £400

Eastside Projects 86 Heath Mill Lane, Birmingham, B9 4AR, UK
Contact 0121-771-1778 info@eastsideprojects.org www.eastsideprojects.org

Free Entry: Open Thursday 12-6.30pm, Friday to Saturday 12-5pm

Eastside Projects is an artist-run space as public gallery, not for profit company Limited by guarantee reg: 6402007, an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation in partnership with Birmingham City University, supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation Breakthrough Fund.