

MODERN ART OXFORD

PRESS RELEASE: Monday 18 October 2010

DAVID AUSTEN: END OF LOVE

11 December 2010 – 20 February 2011

Modern Art Oxford presents *End of Love*, the latest in a series of films by artist David Austen. Austen's practice encompasses painting, drawing, sculpture, and more recently film, and shows an unceasing fascination with people through myriad observations of thoughts, actions, relationships and performances, reaching from the tender to the absurd. These depictions appear in diverse form from swift studies to intense narratives, but all resonate with a directness and rawness that typifies Austen's practice. Imbued with a nostalgic quality and steeped in the languages of 19th and 20th century film and literature, and crime and science fiction novels, Austen's work emerges as something wholly original.

In recent years Austen has produced short films; whilst formally distinct, they run in close parallel to his work in other mediums. The ambitious new film *End of Love* created for his Stanley Picker Fellowship embraces themes of human impulse and emotion explored in two previous films: *Smoking Moon* and *Crackers*, both made in 2007.

Austen describes *End of Love* as 'a musical without music, performed at the end of the world'. The location is the stage of a London theatre where there is no audience. We meet twelve characters that all seem lost, hurt, or broken – an old moon, lovers on the run, a dark angel, a homeless man, a lonely astronaut, an imprisoned woman, a love-torn dandy, a betrayed Cyclops and an aged Jack the Giant Killer. They are marginal figures, outsiders; all of them are homeless, travellers or wanderers and present themselves to us in a vulnerable and exposed way. They may sometimes appear brutal, but like the human figures in Austen's drawings, participating in an encyclopedia of sex and violence, they are also fragile, childlike and tenderly depicted.

Referencing theatre, literature, expanded cinema and performance, as well as the artist's personal practice, *End of Love* is a poetic expression of love's elusiveness, the non-linearity of time, and fleeting facets of personal memory. A stellar cast including Vicky McClure (*This is England*, 2006; *This is England '86*, 2010), Elliot Cowan (*Macbeth*, Globe Theatre, 2010) and Joseph Mawle (*Red Riding*, 2009) are amongst the professional actors that appear in Austen's latest film.

Austen's exhibition will extend into The Yard, with the evocatively titled *Smoke Town*. Giant billboard posters of the film's protagonists and short enigmatic texts that read as film titles or characters' names will clad the walls, illuminated by a series of spectacular hanging lights made from circles of interlocking steel. *Smoke Town* will transform The Yard into a space suggestive of an other-worldly station platform or the threshold to a theatre.

A fully-illustrated catalogue will be produced to accompany the exhibition.

Showing concurrently with *David Austen: End of Love*, will be *Thomas Houseago*, from 11 December 2010 – 20 February 2011.

ENDS

For further information and images please contact: Kayleigh Hellin, Press and Marketing Assistant, Tel. 01865 813804, Email. kayleigh.hellin@modernartoxford.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the artist:

David Austen (born 1960, Harlow, Essex) lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include *David Austen – My love, I have been digging up my own bones in the garden again*, Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh (2009); *Man Smoking*, Schiavo Mazzonis Gallery, Italy (2009); *David Austen*, Milton Keynes Gallery, (2007); *Glitter*, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London (2007) and *Crackers*, (film screening) Locarno Film Festival, Italy (2007).

Exhibition Details:

David Austen: *End of Love*

Dates: 11 December 2010 – 20 February 2011

Modern Art Oxford
30 Pembroke Street
Oxford OX1 1BP
Tel: 01865 722 733

www.modernartoxford.org.uk

Gallery opening hours: Tuesday, Wednesday 10am – 5pm; Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10am – 10pm; Sunday 12pm – 5pm; Closed Monday
Free Admission

