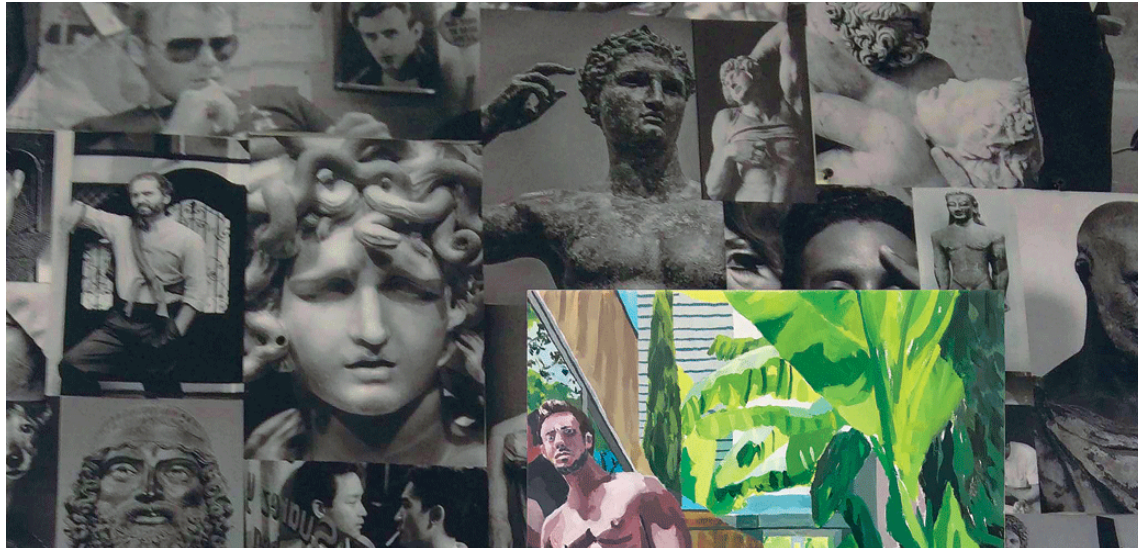




What the Artist Saw

Posted on 26th January 2017



Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of English playwright and author Joe Orton, an exhibition of contemporary art inspired by his life and work is set to open next month at the Museum of Contemporary Art in South London. Co-curator Michael Petry explains more.



How did this show come about?

I was in a conference with co-curator Dr Emma Parker's partner Dr Sarah Graham and she mentioned that Emma was an Orton Scholar and that this year was the 50th anniversary of his death. Emma was looking for a way to commemorate it and I knew

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that we, the Museum of Contemporary Art, London could put together a great show, so we started talking about it and moved on quickly from there.

How would you describe the work that each of the three artists produced?

The three artists are making very different things using different media, and they are all looking back to Orton in their own way.

Tim Youd is a Los Angeles based performance artist who will type all of Orton's work on one sheet of paper. He will use a similar typewriter to Orton and will type at the Islington Library, where Orton and his lover Kenneth Halliwell infamously altered the covers of books, and in the lobby of the Queen's Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue, where Orton's *What the Butler Saw* was originally performed. Youd will finish typing at MOCA and, when finished, the page will be framed and hung up. For dates of when Tim will be retyping, visit mocalondon.co.uk.



David Lock, a painter, is the nephew of Joe Orton, and he will hang two new paintings on a specially made wall collage similar in to the immersive one at Noel Road that Orton and Halliwell made in their flat. *El Muniria* is named after the hotel in Tangiers that the beat generation stayed at and *Blue Boxers* shows us the pert buttocks of a young man clad in said underwear wearing a white t-shirt and sports socks, all of which look like they are likely to come off in a moment or two.

Louise Plant is a sculptor and she will present a very conceptual look at Orton and his work. Her piece *Rip Cord* is a bright red sculptural line that zigs zags in space. She says of the piece: "A rip cord is pulled to save a life or lives. With this piece I have combined the red blood of the beating heart and blood that is shed when one is wounded. The tautness of the material between joints portrays the discomfort I feel but at the same time can seek, in wanting to both live a good, safe life, and yet at a primitive or base level also want to 'let rip' and badly wound."



The work will be on display in several venues – why were these venues chosen?

Joe Orton was born in Leicester and his papers and archive are held at the University of Leicester, so we thought it was very important for the show to go there. It will be at the New Walk Museum from 29 July – 22 October and is free there and at MOCA London. There is also a great catalogue (also free at the venues) designed by EKCO and you will also be able to download it for free as an iBook from the MOCA London website. It has all the pieces in the show as well as images of Orton's work. Emma has written a great short biography of Orton for those less familiar with him, his life, his death at the hands of Halliwell, and his art.

What the Artist Saw: Art Inspired by the Life and Work of Joe Orton runs from 5 February until 4 March at Museum of Contemporary Art, 113 Bellenden Road, London, SE15 4QY, mocalondon.co.uk.

Art credits:

Rip Cord/Louise Plant/2017

Powder coated steel

34 x 49 x 42cm

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Looted with El Muniria/

David Lock/2017

Inkjet paper collage and oil on canvas

Painting: 61cm x 46cm

Collage: 297.5cm x 243cm

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Blue Boxers/David Lock/2017

Oil on canvas

31cm x 26cm

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