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James Winnett

*Visions of Wooddene 14th December 2008 – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009*

### *Statement*

My work is often concerned with notions of place, borders and identities. I regularly work site specifically in the public realm; in Oxford, Torquay and Southwark I have built interventions which have examined the character and identity of a site. Travel is also an important part of my work; in *Thingvellir and The Special Relationship, 2008*, I travelled to Iceland to create a performative video piece filmed in a crevasse of the continental divide between America and Europe.

I aim to make use of the fact that my works exist within a specific context and time. I find that work can rarely exist solely in a gallery space, devoid of any relationship with what lies just outside of 'the frame'.

Although often rooted in current issues such as globalisation, migration, sustainability and the environment, my work is commonly constructed out of the familiar and the historical; cultural artefacts, souvenirs, informants of place and identity, are collected and manipulated. I seek to shift understandings of everyday objects, images and places by reconfiguring them either through physical processes, such as collage and painting, or through changes in context, such as in an installation or video; a theoretical territory born from fact, but inherently fictitious, draws from both the historical and the contemporary to present a context where what is generally accepted and commonplace can be viewed in a new light. I also recognise the role that humour can play in my work.

I am conscious of the potential role art can begin to play in providing a space for perceptions to change.

### *The show*

James's work has been created, site specifically for the M2 gallery, responding to the space of the architect's practice and its location within Peckham. Following an investigation into the history of the area and the forces behind its shifting social and physical identity, James has focused on the recently demolished Wooddene Estate, a stones throw from the m2 gallery. Today this expansive site lies flat and graded, awaiting the results of a council evaluation report.

Operating within this context by imagining fantastical future visions for the Wooddene site, Winnett's collaged proposals deliberately avoid the usual considerations of housing numbers, planning obligations and community facilities. Unrealistic, idyllic and consciously out of place, they inhabit both a real and fictional space where issues of nostalgia, the environment and the role of the architect's impression can be explored.

### *The Artist*

James currently lives in Oxford being a recent graduate of the fine Art department @ Oxford Brookes University. While continuing his practice as an artist and showing at Modern Art Oxford he also works for the Public Art Commissioning Agency Artpoint Trust in Oxford.