

SWG3 Gallery

100 Eastvale Place, Glasgow G3 8QG

Jimmy Merris
Life eh, tut

Jimmy Merris' films and performances offer a singular insight into the life of a young artist subsisting in the socio-economic present. Personally featuring prominently in his lo-fi collages and cut-up performances to camera, he flouts the conventional division between 'life' and 'work'; locations, materials and cast expediently gathered from the local communities around his studio near Rye Lane, South London. The resultant surreal, often lurid, visual experiences confront the staid reality of contemporary practice – Or as the artist's self-caricature in his 2014 film *Final Piece* puts it; "Knee-jerk performance – It's a dirty protest against boring art – Where's the Magic?"

While much of the work courts a humorous response, Merris is sincere; "*I am full of energy, excitement and cheerfulness but mark my words, I am serious.*" Two recent collaborations with Julie Verhoven and films *Jimmy Merris sings the Blues* and *LONDON*, are all honest odes to love, friendship and the struggle to make art in an economic downturn.

For his exhibition at SWG3 Gallery Merris presents a new audio work composed for the interior of his grandmother's car; an over-dubbed bootleg of Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* performed in a Ford KA. Inserting himself as the next in the long line of celebrity narrators of the classic piece, Merris' distinctive tones guide the viewer through the exhibition as David Bowie, John Geilgud and Terry Wogan did when introducing children to the orchestra.

Viewable through the car's rear window, a suite of new paintings on brown paper demonstrates the artist's non-hierarchical approach to gathering materials and subject matter. The series of self-portraits depicts him as studio-bound artist - a vessel for worldly woes. These projected situations address personal ambitions and anxieties timelessly exorcised by artistic production; *OMG I die (self-portrait on a Chez Long)* and *Self-portrait with a tiny little pecker*.

His 2013 film *Jimmy Merris sings the Blues* is presented here in its own 'bluesman's hut'. The film is a lament to creative frustration and heartbreak, metered-out through the words of Youtube-ed American blues singers. Amongst these, Merris inserts his own wry lyrical observations about the frustration of labour; "*Keep your chin up and your head down... How you gonna to do that?*"

Jimmy Merris (b. 1983, London, UK) lives and works in South London. He studied at London College of Communication. Selected exhibitions and performances include *Julie og Jimmy down ICA*, ICA, London (2015); *New City Art Prize*, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, (2014); *Julie og Jimmy go dogging*, Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen (2014); *LONDON*, Bloomberg Space, London (2013); *Jimmy Merris sings the Blues*, Seventeen, London (2013); *Deep Joy on Home Soil*, Studio Voltaire, London (2012).

Life eh, tut is Merris' first solo exhibition in Scotland.