

BRIGHTON PHOTO BIENNIAL 2010



PRESS RELEASE – 07.10.09

COSY by Jonathan Swain

Commissioned by Brighton Photo Biennial
as part of Brighton & Hove's White Night

The theme of Brighton's White Night 2009 is the unexpected, where things are not always quite as they seem...



Jonathan Swain *PB7* (2006)

COSY

Date: Saturday 24 October 2009

Time: 11.45pm sharp

Location: the pillar box, Palace Place, Brighton, BN1 1EF (on the corner of the Old Steine and North Street)

The Event

A single, large format photograph will be taken of a group of **postal workers**, thanking members of a **knitting circle** for the gift of a homemade cosy for their local pillar box. A gesture of solidarity to celebrate the hidden industry of those who work at night.

This group photograph will be the product of a guerilla collaboration between **Jonathan Swain**, the **knitting circle**, autonomous **postal workers** and a **lighting crew**. It will be a special tea break for the postal workers. An acknowledgement of the long history of the postal service and those who work in it, treasuring a threatened form of communication.

The taking of the photograph, witnessed by a crowd of nighttime revellers, will be a slice of irrational magic and humble warmth, the kind of thing that darkness induces. Closer to fiction than fact. A very short, millisecond memorial. After all the attention, **the pillar box cosy** will be left in place, a prototype for a further, unexplained rash of copycat, knitted cosy actions.

This project is partly informed by the historic use of photography to record key public and celebratory events, such as retirement parties or weddings, when a group of people are managed and directed by a photographer. The result is a codified, conventionalised image, which captures the moment and the group bearing witness.

The **COSY** photograph will also commemorate the transitional stage from the postal service and handwritten letter, now a threatened form of communication, to the ubiquitous use of online and mobile phone technologies.

After the event, the **COSY** photograph will be disseminated into the public realm through hard and e-copy formats. It will become a record of a real, but faked event.

Since 2003, **Brighton Photo Biennial** has established itself as one of the most important celebrations of international photography in the UK delivering a series of challenging and stimulating events for both the general public and art specialists.

For its fourth edition, **Brighton Photo Biennial 2010** will be curated by the internationally renowned photographer, editor and curator, **Martin Parr**, who is already working with arts organisations and educational institutions in Brighton & Hove to develop an exciting series of exhibitions and events. **BPB** is also collaborating with satellite partners in the South East.

The Biennial presents the work of international artists from a range of cultural backgrounds, commissioning new work, premiering recent work and exhibiting historical work in new contexts. The Biennial is committed to stimulating debate on photography in all its forms: new and historic, digital and analogue, still and moving and, through this, aims to reach the widest possible audiences.

The Biennial is a partnership organisation and works with a diverse and exciting range of galleries, visual arts organisations and educational institutions in the city of Brighton & Hove and venues across the South East region. Its key partners are the University of Brighton, which hosts the Biennial office, organises exhibitions and the Biennial conference,

and Photoworks, the Brighton-based organisation that commissions new photography, produces exhibitions and publications and initiates research and education programmes. The Biennial collaborates closely with Brighton Photo Fringe to encourage and showcase local talent.

Brighton Photo Biennial runs a continuous education programme that is active during and between Biennials, creating grass roots projects with local communities, artists and individuals. Through this extensive education programme, the Biennial aims to reach the widest possible audiences and create exciting opportunities for participation and engagement.

Brighton & Hove's **White Night** festival celebrates the end of British Summer Time with a range of cultural events, most of which are free.

W: www.whitenightnuitblanche.com/brighton

Jonathan Swain, the artist, and creator of **COSY**, has a preoccupation with contemporary urban decay and commercial deceit. He communicates his concerns and ideas by whatever medium suits. **COSY** is a project for BPB's interim year and is being commissioned in response to Martin Parr's curatorial approach.

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