

Photography exhibition LOOKING DOWN by homeless artist Andy Palfreyman highlights the invisible homeless in London

Thursday 5 September, 2019

Exhibition opening: Thursday 3 October, 6-9pm

Exhibition dates: 4-8 October, 10am – 4pm (closed on Sunday)

Venue: The Swiss Church in London, 79 Endell Street, London WC2H 9DY

Andy held his first exhibition 'Cardboard and Caviar' at the Swiss Church in London in December 2015 showing some of the doorways that became his home over his 30 years of living homeless on the street. The exhibition was a great success and in 2017 the exhibition was also shown in Zurich, Switzerland. Andy has also been exhibited at Tate Modern as part of the Museum of Homelessness exhibition.

"Photography is a way of expressing myself and how I see the world. Until 2015 I had no idea I had any artistic talent and I didn't believe in myself. I had very little self-worth, hence 30 years on the streets. Photography empowers me and hopefully is going to raise awareness for homelessness. This is what it's about for me."

In his second exhibition, 'Looking Down,' Andy aims to draw attention to two aspects of homelessness: first, how the homeless are looked down on both physically and metaphorically; and second how the homeless look down in order to scan the ground for useful found objects. The exhibition will showcase 15 C-type photographic prints exhibited on specially designed low-lying plinths, carefully placed throughout the expansive church hall. The walking path through the exhibition will be designed in a way that allows visitors to see the images as Andy did, finding the same objects while also looking down.

Andy says: *"When you are street homeless you tend to look down and notice things most of the general public don't see. It strikes a chord with me, why it's there, how it got there, and I photograph it. It feels like I'm the only person who sees it. Some of these things can be upsetting, but I see it from a homeless person's point of view. When I see these things I can personally relate to them. For example in Shaftesbury Avenue there is a broken spanner pressed into the tarmac. It reminds me how homeless people are pushed down and become invisible. Once a homeless guy walked past me, it just started to rain, and he left footprints on the wet pavement. I call this photograph The Invisible Homeless"*

Daniella Rossi, Director of Rossi Asiaghi Ltd. and curator of the exhibition, says:

"At a time when the art world is dominated by artists who come from privileged backgrounds, it's great to showcase Andy's poignant, reflective work and show how talent doesn't always have to be trained. Andy's work is well executed and relevant. His photographs show hardship with a cutting sense of humour and a wink."

Andy Palfreyman was street homeless for 30 years after he left his parents' home in Cheshire at the age of 19. In those years, he has slept mostly in the streets of London in various postcodes. His life changed dramatically in 2015 after a chance conversation with an artist who had an exhibition next to the Swiss Church where he used to come for weekly breakfast. That's how he got his first camera and the necessary support for his artistic work.

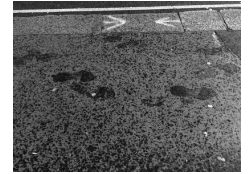
Andy got off the streets when he started to work for the Swiss Church and Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, both as a volunteer and part-time paid work. He still laughs about this, "I'm not religious I only used to go there for the coffee!" The Simon Community used to come to the Swiss Church for a women's group. Their outreach worker offered Andy a room in their community house which involves volunteering in their efforts to help the homeless. The way out of homelessness however is challenging both mentally and physically. There are periods when Andy still sleeps rough and he is still technically homeless as at the moment he is sofa surfing, but eventually hopes to have his own place.

There is short video interview with Andy online: <https://vimeo.com/240993554>

Andy is available for interviews.

For more information, images or interviews please contact Shelley Bennett, Yeti PR

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Yeti PR

T. 07890101841

E. shelley@yeti.pr.co.uk

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