

Stuart Whipps *The Kipper and The Corpse* 11 - 15 September 2019



Stuart Whipps, Installation view, *The Kipper and The Corpse*, The British Art Show 8 (2015)
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To coincide with Birmingham Heritage Week, Ikon presents an 'exposition' by artist Stuart Whipps, part of his long-term art project *The Kipper and The Corpse* (2004 – ongoing). A vast body of work, it is a multifaceted reflection on the closure of the Longbridge motor works in Birmingham, the last British owned volume car manufacturer.

Whipps admits that he 'often makes work about things he doesn't understand and doesn't know how to do' - previously training with the University of Birmingham to create geological thin sections or working with a seventeenth century sign language devised by Sir Christopher Wren. *The Kipper and The Corpse*, which takes its name from an episode of British sitcom *Fawlty Towers*, sees Whipps attempting the complete restoration of a 1979 Mini, calling on the assistance and mechanical expertise of former British Leyland workers.

The car, here for the first time in its fully refurbished state, is the focal point of the exposition alongside photography, texts and archival material from 1979, including political cartoons referencing British Leyland. The year holds particular significance for Whipps; it was the year of his birth, Margaret Thatcher was elected as Prime Minister and it saw the sacking of British Trade Unionist Derrick Robinson, otherwise known as 'Red Robbo', at the Longbridge motor works. Forty years on, *The Kipper and The Corpse* focuses entirely on this moment in history, exemplifying Whipps' interest in the ramifications of the past on the present through cycles of political and socio-economic change.

"I like the idea that it (the Mini) would sit in an art gallery, in a traditional setting...it's not trying to make it sculptural in an artful way through the subversion of materials, it's through this straight presentation of 'here's this object, here are these narratives that relate to it'." Stuart Whipps

The Kipper and The Corpse was commissioned by WERK as part of the Longbridge Public Art Project. This Ikon presentation is dedicated to the memory of Keith Woodfield who worked at the Longbridge motor works for over 30 years and was a guiding light for the artist.

ENDS

For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Sam Newman or Emily Luxford on 0121 248 0708 or email s.newman@ikon-gallery.org / e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org

Social Media Handles:

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook:

@ikongallery @s_whipps #IkonGallery #StuartWhipps

Links: ikon-gallery.org / stuartwhipps.com

Note to Editors:

1. Exhibition opening and in-conversation event: Wednesday 11 September, 6-8pm.
2. Stuart Whipps has exhibited his work across the UK and internationally and is the recipient of a number of awards. He works predominantly with photography and video alongside reconfigured existing or remade materials. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Isle Of Slingers*, Spike Island 2016, Bristol. *Photo Colour Services*, Ithuba Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa. *Birth Springs*, *Death Falls*, *Flat Time House*, London. 2013. *Why Contribute to The Spread of Ugliness?*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 2011. *New Wooabbeleri*, *Focal Point Gallery*, Southend-On-Sea, 2010. Selected group exhibitions include: *British Art Show 8*, UK, 2015 - 2017. *Reference Works: Guangzhou*, *Guangzhou*, China, 2014. *Relatively Absolute*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridgeshire, 2013. *Community Without Propinquity*, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, 2011.

3. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art.
4. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
5. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. ACE support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, ACE will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. [artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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Ikon Gallery
1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / ikon-gallery.org
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Stuart Whipps, Newspaper cartoon with engine and gearbox (2016)
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Stuart Whipps, *Longbridge, North Site, 033* (2008)
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Stuart Whipps with Keith Woodfield during the Longbridge Public Art Project (2015)
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