

Purdy | Hicks

In association with Candlestar

Press Release

Abbas Kiarostami – a photographic overture

26 – 30 May 2009

Private View 26 May 6-8pm

On 29 May this year the acclaimed Iranian film director and artist, Abbas Kiarostami, will make his UK opera directing debut with English National Opera (ENO) at the London Coliseum with a new staging of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. To coincide with this latest development in Kiarostami's extraordinary career Purdy Hicks Gallery are collaborating with the London based cultural consultancy Candlestar to present a short exhibition of Abbas Kiarostami's recent photographic and film work.

Kiarostami is clear about the importance of still photographs, stating, 'One single picture could be the mother of cinema. That's where cinema starts, with one single picture.'

Abbas Kiarostami is an internationally renowned film director, screenwriter and producer, having directed such critically acclaimed works as *A Taste of Cherry* (1997) and *The Koker Trilogy* (1987-94). He has directed over forty films and has won numerous awards, including the Palm d'Or in 1997. As well as a distinguished film career, Kiarostami is a poet, photographer and painter. Exhibitions of his work have been held at numerous international museums including MOMA New York, Victoria & Albert Museum, London and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran.

The exhibition at Purdy Hicks Gallery will focus on selected photographs from three series – *Roads*, *Rain* and *Snow White*. Around the time of the Iranian Revolution, a time of personal crisis, Kiarostami, started to develop his intense interest in still photographs, alongside his interest in moving images. In his photographic work he seeks to distil an image to its barest elements. He has spoken of photography as a purer medium than film, since it is unburdened by narrative and the need to entertain. In *Snow White*, for example, he explores the motif of trees in snow, setting black silhouettes against the blank white snow to yield images that are at once harsh and sublime. The series was a result of the artist's solitary walks in the winter, in which he covered thousands of miles, looking for film sets.

The exhibition will also feature Kiarostami's short film *Sleepers* which was shown at the Venice Biennale in 2001 and the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris in 2007. This well-known floor projection of a good-looking couple sleeping in a life-sized bed is a guilty, voyeuristic pleasure that takes on a heightened eroticism as the woman turns over on her side and the man flexes his fingers.

Kiarostami explains why he needs to make photographs: 'Contemplating the cloudy sky and the massive trunk of a tree under a magical light is difficult when one is alone. Not being able to feel the pleasure of seeing a magnificent landscape with someone else is a form of torture. That is why I started taking photographs. I wanted somehow to eternalize those moments of passion and pain.'



Ends

For more information and high resolution images:

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Notes to editors

Abbas Kiarostami

Abbas Kiarostami was born in Tehran, Iran, on June 22, 1940. He graduated from Tehran University School of Fine Arts before starting work as a graphic designer. He then joined the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, where he started a film section, and this started his career as a filmmaker at the age of 30. Since then he has directed over 40 films such as Taste of Cherry and Ten and has become one of the most important and respected figures in international contemporary film. He is also a poet, photographer, painter, illustrator, and graphic designer and has had numerous gallery exhibitions of his photography and short films.

PurdyHicks

Purdy Hicks first opened the gallery in 1992 in Jacob Street Studios in south east London. It moved in 1995 to its present site, a 3000 sq ft former Victorian warehouse, close to Tate Modern.

The gallery is committed to exhibiting the best of contemporary international art by established and emerging artists. Purdy Hick's holds solo and group exhibitions that showcase the major players of the current global art scene, as well as representing a number of individual artists.

<http://www.purdyhicks.com>

Candlestar

Candlestar Ltd. is an international cultural consultancy specialising in production, collaboration and commissions for individual artists, designers and major educational and cultural institutions. Candlestar have a fast growing portfolio of international art projects that currently range from the Prix Pictet for Pictet & Cie to the Masques of Shahrazad exhibition of 3 generations of Iranian women artists. Candlestar have a strong reputation for their work within the contemporary Iranian art scene, working with individual artists, acting as secretariat for the Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize for emerging Iranian artists, and producing exhibitions showcasing contemporary Iranian art.

www.candlestar.co.uk

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