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Martin Usborne

The Silence of Dogs in Cars

Texts by Susan McHugh,

Martin Usborne

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Intense and highly cinematic portraits of dogs gazing silently through car windows – emotive and amusing

Shot over three years, Martin Usborne's series consists of over forty images of dogs gazing silently through car windows, often in the dead of night. The images, which are staged and highly cinematic, evoke a mood of loneliness and longing. They are not so much portraits of dogs as studies in separation: on one level referring to the separation between humans and (other) animals but on another the separation within ourselves, between our everyday selves and the rawer (more animal) parts that we keep locked away. The images, which draw on the work of Hopper and Crewdson, have a subtle humour as well as some hope – Usborne wants to show that there is beauty in the darkest spaces within us.

Martin Usborne (b. 1973 in London) focuses his work mainly on portraits, both human and animal. He strives to make his work poignant but also a little playful. He has published two books, *I've lived in Hoxton for 81 1/2 years* (2009) and *My name is Moose: modern life through a dog's eyes* (2011). *The Silence of Dogs in Cars* has been shown in solo exhibitions in London and Los Angeles as well as on various art blogs and in magazines around the world, e. g. The New Yorker Photo Booth, Time Light Box, Burn Magazine, foto8, BBC Viewfinder, The Guardian, The Independent, British Journal of Photography, Das Magazin, Hotshoe, PDN Photo District News.

<http://www.martinusborne.com>

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Susan McHugh teaches courses in writing, literary theory, and animal studies. She is the author of *Animal Stories: Narrating across Species Lines*, in the University of Minnesota Press's Posthumanities series, as well as *Dog*, in Reaktion Books' Animal series.

The series is not about the issue of leaving dogs in hot cars, though Martin, a confirmed dog-lover..., is obviously aware of the animal welfare debate. These pictures stem from his childhood experience and then extend into the feeling of isolation many of us will experience, in this case in a modern urban setting.

Phil Coomes, BBC Viewfinder

Dogs get pretty used to an annoying photographer peering through the glass trying to get them to either look or not. They tended to under-react if anything. Various tricks were used to get their attention, anything from dangling ham outside the glass to playing Sinead O'Connor (the huskies only howled in response to 'nothing compares 2U'. I don't blame them)

Martin Usborne

Exhibition

The Little Black Gallery, London

19 March 2013 - 27 April 2013

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