



John Smith: Le Baiser

Art

Film and video

La Galerie

Until Sat Dec 13



John Smith, 'Gargantuan', 1992 / Courtesy de l'artiste et de La Galerie centre d'art contemporain, Noisy-le-Sec

Time Out says

Posted: Thu Oct 23 2014

[La Galerie](#) at Noisy-le-Sec is exhibiting ten short films directed by John Smith between 1976 and 2014. Smith's personality shines through in his work and helps him to stand out from other directors of his generation: he has a distinctive avant garde penchant for irony and humour in laying bare the camera tricks used in filming. The director's acute perceptiveness underlies each film, toying with appearances and undermining preconceptions.

Smith uses simple yet effective techniques to convey his messages. In 'The Girl Chewing Gum' for example, the director simply places his camera on a London pavement for twelve minutes, adding a voiceover to the footage that pretends to control the move of each pigeon, car or passer by that happens to be caught by the camera.

You could call John Smith paranoid, you could call him eccentric. Above all, he is a master at prompting viewer curiosity by making the orderly chaotic, and bringing the chaotic to order through film. Nothing is ever as it seems in Smith's films, which always feature optical illusions or scrutinise the seemingly straight-forward.

By **Tania Brimson/MH**