Press release

Juan Cruz
I don’t know what I’m doing but I’m trying very hard.

September 8 - 16 2018
Open daily 12 - 6pm
PV Friday September 7, 6 - 9 pm

Juan Cruz’s I don’t know what I’m doing but I’m trying very hard. is the artist’s fourth show with Matt’s Gallery.

For this exhibition Cruz seeks to develop themes of his 2001 show at the gallery. In Portrait of a Sculptor the artist shifted the organisation of the gallery’s space, moving the gallery into the bookshop and vice versa. In 2018, Cruz again fiddles with the architecture of the space, the former commercial unit that is Ron Henocq’s studio at 92 Webster Road, by sidestepping the gallery created by architect Tomas Klassnik’s 3x3x3m cube, in a gesture that speaks to an interest and awareness of remaining somehow on the margins of art making.

The video shown has grown out of a series of photographs made by the artist after taking a weekly run; photographs that were not originally intended as art works but which were subsequently noticed as images that might betray some insight. A rucksack containing a series of print outs of these selfies was stolen from the artist while he attended the funeral of a former teacher, and this experience affected a shift in the artist’s thinking about the work, leading him to consider them as a form of auto-obituary.

Cruz’s gestures strive to be slight and self-effacing while battling the essential ego required to do anything at all and think that others might want to see it. In this regard, the work speaks to Cruz’s ongoing interest in the poetry of his namesake, the mystic poet San Juan de la Cruz and his famous assertion I live without living in me.

I don’t know what I’m doing but I’m trying very hard. is characterised by a rather desperate, sentimental and hubristic desire to avoid aging, irrelevance and death. Cruz grapples with the shame and embarrassment of being an artist and the bizarre irony of wanting publicly to deal with that shame through the form of the exhibition.

Juan Cruz is Professor of Fine Art and Dean of Arts & Humanities at the Royal College of Art and is represented by Matt’s Gallery.

For further information or visual material please contact us on 020 7237 0398 or email info@mattsgallery.org.

Matt’s Gallery thanks the Arts Council England and Ron Henocq Fine Art for their generous support.