

PAUL ROONEY

McKenzie

OUTPOST

2 June to 21 June

12 noon to 6pm daily

Opening View: Wednesday 1 June, 6 - 9pm

Open to public - admission free

OUTPOST presents Liverpool based artist Paul Rooney and his work *McKenzie*; a sound work inspired by a Liverpool legend of a man named William McKenzie, a gambler who is said to have made a pact with the devil to ensure a winning hand in a poker game. The work is shown here for the first time in a gallery context.

McKenzie, concerned that the devil would claim him if he were to be buried underground, left instructions that when dead his body would be encased in a pyramid, built in the graveyard, where he would be placed sat upright at a card table, with a winning hand of cards. The tomb still stands in the derelict graveyard of St Andrew's Church on Rodney Street in Liverpool. Although you cannot gain any proximity to the pyramid tomb, the graveyard and pyramid are visible from the road and served as the original location for Rooney's sound piece.

Walking into OUTPOST's gallery space, the spectator is confronted by a single speaker and PA system playing out a spoken monologue. One perhaps initially assumes that it is the voice of McKenzie talking to you, but you soon realise that this anonymous person is talking to McKenzie, creating a one-sided conversation to which you are silent witness. The male voice is talking to a man sat in darkness, who is holding a hand of cards. The voice, whose language alternates between archaic biblical phraseology, friendly banter and intimidating threats, seems to be that of an interrogator, who tells of a mock execution involving a lighted match that he has recently put the poker player through. It also seems that the inquisitor will repeatedly subject the man, 'you', to the same ordeal, perhaps indefinitely. Frequently punctuated and interspersed with music from Liverpool band Mugstar, the voice could be that of Satan, an Abu Ghraib interrogator or simply another facet of McKenzie himself, who believes, the voice tells us, that both heaven and hell are within all of us.

McKenzie was commissioned by Sound and Music.

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