

# CCA: Centre for Contemporary Arts

## Ross Birrell The Transit of Hermes

**Thu 19 April — Sun 3 June 2018**

**Tue-Sat: 11am-6pm // Sun: 12noon-6pm // Free**

**Open Mondays, 11am-6pm, during GI (19 April – 7 May)**

CCA is pleased to present Scottish artist Ross Birrell's 2017 documenta 14 projects, *Criollo* and *The Athens-Kassel Ride: The Transit of Hermes*, which includes new film, photographic and installation works conceived specifically for this exhibition in Glasgow.

Birrell's projects were inspired by Tschiffely's *Ride*, a 10,000 mile journey from Buenos Aires to New York (1925-1928) by Swiss-Argentine Aimé Félix Tschiffely on two Argentine criollo horses, Mancha and Gato. The criollo horse is a mixture of Arab and Barbary breeds, the name stemming from 'creole' with associations of social and cultural mixing. Tschiffely's account was published in 1933, the same year Hitler seized power in Germany, implementing a biopolitics of hatred based upon an ideology of racial purity. In contrast, Tschiffely's *Ride* is dedicated "to many friends – of whatever race, nationality or creed – Who did their utmost to make rough places smooth."

In Birrell's film, *Criollo* (2017), we encounter a solitary horse at the threshold to Central Park at the end of 6th Avenue - Avenue of the Americas. Photographs document the animal's journey via air and road transportation as it appears at three identical equestrian statues to the Argentine leader, José de San Martín, in Buenos Aires, Washington D.C., and New York.

Linking the two cities of documenta 14, *The Athens-Kassel Ride* was undertaken by experienced long riders (Peter van der Gugten, David Wewetzer, Zsolt Szabo and Tina Boche and their equine companions (Artvin, Issy Kul, Paco and Calfino Sancho), documented by Birrell with the riders. The 100-day ride traced a 3000km trail through Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria and Germany. The riders were accompanied by a Greek Arravani horse 'Hermes,' named by Birrell after the Greek god of border crossings. *The Transit of Hermes* is the journey of a Greek horse which also becomes a mythical messenger of the Gods, constantly in motion between two worlds. The exhibition includes new film work which centres on the journey of Hermes as the animal travels through the landscapes of Europe, evoking symbolic conditions of migration, exile, and continuous movement.

*The Transit of Hermes* is an exhibition, therefore, which combines literal and metaphorical journeys, traversing north and south, human and animal, myth and materiality.

**A series of events and a new publication accompanies the exhibition please book at box office or at [cca-glasgow.com](http://cca-glasgow.com):**

Filipa Ramos: How to Look at Animals? Lecture, 11am, GFT, Fri 20 April 2018, free unticketed  
What are humans looking at when they look at different animals? What happens when humans and other animals exchange gazes? In what ways can we look, see one another, be looked at, acknowledging how we are seeing and being seen? In what ways were some of the current predominant forms of visual contact with other species—namely the zoological garden and the cinema—structured throughout modern times? Borrowing and twisting John Berger’s famous article *Why Look at Animals?*, this talk will visit certain episodes of the history of the constitution of the zoo and the cinema, considering their common roots, their shared systems of display, and how both apparatuses constitute a very unique kind of animal, neither wild nor domestic, neither pet nor pest nor beast, who stands in a temporal and spatial limbo.

Bilocations: Ross Birrell & Adam Szymczyk in conversation, 11am, Sat 21 April, Reid Auditorium, The Glasgow School of Art, free but ticketed  
In the context of Ross Birrell’s concurrent solo exhibitions, *Criollo*, *Ellen de Bruijne Projects*, *Amsterdam* and *The Transit of Hermes*, CCA, part of Glasgow International – exhibitions based upon works originally commissioned for *documenta 14* (2017) – the artist will be in conversation with Adam Szymczyk, Artistic Director of *documenta 14*. Taking its title from the third chapter of Thomas Pynchon’s *Against the Day*, ‘bilocations’ will explore the structure of the works commissioned for *documenta 14*, Birrell’s ongoing *Envoy* series, and film and music projects developed with artist, David Harding, many of which were also commissioned by Szymczyk. The talk will address the overlapping territories of artist and curator, theory and practice, aesthetics and politics, past and present, and the bilocated structure of *documenta 14* itself, hosted for the first time in full across two separate cities: Athens and Kassel.

Ross Birrell: Artist Talk, 1pm, Fri 27 April 2018, CCA Galleries, free unticketed  
Join artist Ross Birrell along with CCA curator Ainslie Roddick for a lunchtime tour of *The Transit of Hermes*.

Book Launch: The Parasite, 6pm, Wed 23 May 2018, CCA Clubroom, free but ticketed  
Join us for the launch of Ross Birrell’s book, *The Parasite*, a fragmented text published in English, German and Greek ‘variations’ made using words excised from the respective editions of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Parasite*.

Part of Glasgow International 2018.



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