

Mathew Hale

THE WELCOME STRANGER

Opening

Friday, 10 February 2012, 7-9pm

Performance

Friday, 24 February 2012, 7pm

THE WELCOME STRANGER #9

Slideshow accompanying a live performance of "A Slight Ache" by Harold Pinter and a prologue by Arthur C. Clarke

Exhibition

11 February – 09 March 2012

THE WELCOME STRANGER: a, b, c.

a) 'Between the ages of 3 ½ and 6 ½ I lived with my mother and sister in a small village in England called Kimpton. It was there that I first went to Kindergarten and then on to School; it was the place where I learnt to read. The most striking visual element in the village's main street was the sign on the pub; it spelt out in large capital letters: THE WELCOME STRANGER, but the picture above those big, newly legible words was perplexing to me as a small boy. The vivid painting was of a stork flying across the sky while carrying a little baby suspended from its beak, wrapped in a cloth. Why? No one had told me this was the classic answer given by embarrassed adults when asked by children the great question: 'Where do babies come from?' - which Freud describes as the origin of all human curiosity.

In my imagination I had pictured a tired traveller arriving at a strange inn by night and receiving a warm welcome; that seemed more appropriate. The baby picture did not make sense to me, so one day I asked my mother about it and I vividly remember her replying, "Because darling, a baby is a welcome stranger." Of course ... it was us!' - Mathew Hale

b) For the stranger he welcomes, the master of the house seeks a no longer accidental, but an essential relationship. At the start the two are but isolated substances, between them there is none but accidental communication: you who believe yourself far from home in the home of someone you believe to be at home, you bring merely the accidents of your substance, such accidents as conspire to make a stranger of you, to him who bids you avail yourself of all that makes a merely accidental host of him. But because the master of this house herewith invites the stranger to penetrate to the source of all substances beyond the realm of all accident, this is how he inaugurates a substantial relationship between himself and the stranger, which will be not a relative relationship but an absolute one, as though, the master becoming one with the stranger, his relationship with you who have just set foot here were now but a relationship of one with oneself." - Pierre Klossowski

c) 'When I finally understood [that I wanted a child], my angel of annunciation came upon me when I was one day walking along a sheep trodden winding path. I suddenly found myself standing quite still, gazing down at a pattern of little hoof-marks in the sun-baked mud – and a flood of contentment welled up from beneath my feet.' - Marion Millner | (Written or selected by Mathew Hale)