

SIMON MUNNERY – WHAT AM I ?

PRESS RELEASE

**An Exhibition at Ex-Baldessarre Gallery, Bedford
29th Feb – 9th May 2020**

“Many are willing to suffer for their art, few are willing to learn to draw” – Simon Munnery

Ex-Baldessarre Gallery, Bedford, is proud to present the first ever art exhibition by legendary alternative comedian Simon Munnery. The exhibition will include paintings, props, jokes, videos and archive material spanning 35 years of stand-up comedy. It will include many of his well-known characters such as *Alan Parker: Urban Warrior*, with whom Munnery had a cult BBC Radio 1 show, and *League Against Tedium*, which formed the bases of his BBC 2 television series *Attention Scum*.

Munnery was described by The Scotsman as: *‘The closest that comedy gets to modern art’*, and this exhibition will allow visitors to decide for themselves if his eclectic, profound, and humorous endeavors can be considered art, or not. Some of Munnery’s props from his 35 years of performing at the Edinburgh Festival have been transformed into sculptures, and his stick-men drawings that appear in many of his shows will be exhibited. Also on display, is the oil painting which was the center of his most recent Edinburgh stand-up show *The Wreath*. Munnery has had brushes with the world of art before, having collaborated with Banksy on *Exit Through the Gift Shop* and appearing occasionally as spokesperson for the mysterious graffiti-artist. He also once sold a painting, featuring a joke about the Rolling Stones, to Ronnie Wood of the Rolling Stones.

The exhibition features *Alan Parker: Urban Warrior*, returning after 25 years to amuse the crowds at Extinction Rebellion. During Alan’s stirring routine, which includes showing the crowd some of his drawings, we see many of the crowd getting arrested. We also witness a funeral, staged by Munnery in his garden, in which he ‘catches the Wreath’. Death, pretentiousness and politics are all scrutinized for jokes, but in the humour something else seeps out, and perhaps that something could be ‘art’?

Exhibition Open February 29th 6-9pm and then is open every Saturday 12-6pm until 9th May.

Details and directions www.andyholdenartist.com/ex-baldessarre.

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Ex-Baldessarre is a gallery set up by artist Andy Holden in the Queens Park area of Bedford. It opened with an exhibition of a previously unknown local painter Hermione Burton in Sept 2018, and has since exhibited artists both local and international, bringing new and significant art to the town. The gallery is in a former upholstery workshop, from which it gets its name. Andy Holden’s artwork can be found in the permanent collection of the Tate Gallery, Bristol Museum, Leeds Art Gallery, Towner Gallery, Eastbourne and the Arts Council Collection.

Simon Munnery:

For over 35 years, Munnery has performed around the world, experimenting with and innovating the stand-up form. In the 1990s, his Alan Parker: Urban Warrior character took the comedy circuit by storm, garnering Munnery his own BBC Radio 1 series, which Time Out London called ‘the funniest thing on Radio One’ and a residency on ITV’s Saturday Live. 1996 saw him collaborate with Graham Linehan and Stewart Lee for BBC2 show, *London Shouting*, in his Alan Parker guise, and the character also become a regular contributor to NME magazine. Simon Munnery is a British Comedy Award nominee, Perrier Award nominee, Sony Radio Award winner and Chortle Award winner. He’s most recently appeared in C4’s acclaimed *Flowers*, and will soon be seen in Will Sharpe’s Louis Wain movie biopic, co-starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Claire Foy.