

BEST ART

GATSOBYTER

17-19 Penn Street, Broadmead, Bristol
May 30-June 4

www.plan9.org.uk

The terrible crash that took James Dean at the apex of his life, left a 'live fast die young' legacy that has inspired rebels and boy racers ever since. Aside from the obvious phallic connection, there is an attraction to speed and brute horsepower, and a sense of freedom attached to a cool car. A Ferrari is beyond all but the most capacious pockets, but customising is available to all, whether it be faux fur seat covers, cuddly toys in the back window, noxious dangly air fresheners, a liberal scattering of junk food wrappers or something a little more creative.

'Pimping your ride' has long been part of LA street culture, with cars elevated to status symbols. Integral to lifestyle and street or gang politics, these vehicles have a

story to tell, often offering airbrushed portraits and memorials to lost friends or fallen gang members.

The Gatsobyter references these traditions and all the possible connotations of a 'killer ride'. Taking its name from the acronym on speed cameras, the Gatsobyter was a white Vauxhall Nova in a former life, but under the expert hands of Kieran Brown and Angus Sanders-Dunnachie it has been transformed into a super machine. It has been stripped and transformed with a flame shaped porthole, sculpted with funeral wax flowers, and airbrushed with haunting images of reckless tattooed Hollywood types. It is an entity, an installation, and the lynch pin for a series of workshops, DJ sessions, talks about streetcar culture and customised radio control car racing. The Gatsobyter makes its inaugural drive on June 4 at 3pm.



BEST THEATRE



THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND

The Ustinov Studio, Theatre Royal, Bath
June 2-4

(01225 448844)

www.theatreroyal.org.uk

The old adage asserts, "In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king", but when hapless mountain guide Nunez tumbles down a ravine in the Andes he finds the opposite to be true. He lands in a community so remote that after 15 generations in blindness all concept of sight and a visual dimension is completely lost, as is the idea of 'a place beyond the rocks' where they consider the edge of the world to be.

Nunez is regarded with suspicion and discounted as crazy with his lies and ridiculous tales. He is a blasphemer against the Great Wisdom and the community would prefer to believe that he is a newborn being from the rocks rather than consider the possibility that

he is telling the truth. Only one person believes him, the beautiful Medina. She has no idea she is beautiful, having always been regarded as the least attractive by her sisters who laugh at her rough skin and scratchy eyelashes. They fall in love, she delights in his view of her and indulgently listens to his stories. It is even agreed that they can marry but only if Nunez becomes one of them by allowing the doctor to remove "the moving flickering balls from the front of his face".

HG Wells' remarkable story is a powerful metaphor for racial acceptance and offers an intriguing challenge to the sighted world. Hattie Naylor's exciting new adaptation brings the story to vibrant life with a stunning stark set of mountains of framed Victorian watercolours and mirrors with several tonnes of soft pungent soil creating the colourless but rich country of the blind.

BEST EXHIBITION

INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Honiton, Devon
May 30-June 11

(01404 45006)

www.peteday.co.uk

What marks our lives and our memories? Are the smiling contented relatives we photograph at weddings and Christmas really the family we know? We use photographs to capture special moments and expect them to document our lives but maybe there is more truth in what we leave out. We angle the shots to avoid showing the messy kitchen or the unmade bed, but if that is the truth lurking at the periphery what does it say about us that we don't want to show it?

The minutiae of daily life is by its definition banal, but offered the benefit of centuries of hindsight every detail of the most dull squalid life in Roman times is accorded huge significance. Peter Day has set up a series of cameras throughout his

home and for three years has recorded life as it happens as a living archaeology. In more than 1,200 shots his anthropologist's eye captures the constant cycle of cooking and washing up with the same intensity as the evolution and decay of a relationship. The occasional newspaper in shot places the frame in context, but has little impact on the intimacy of a single life. Each place revisited again and again reveals an ever-changing constancy as possessions are amassed and ejected, the temporary is enshrined in permanence and the permanent is scarred, battered and discarded before its time.

A testament to the temporary state of life and being — or as has been suggested, a cry out for a cleaner — Invisible Boundaries offers a striking new view, each shot blown up to four foot by three, making an epic out of the banal.

