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## Paul Rooney

Until Jun 15

Matt's, 42-44 Copperfield Rd, E3 4RR

Rating: ★★★★★

By **Rebecca Geldard**

Posted: Mon May 12

Paul Rooney's latest film and text works are constructed from real accounts of historical events (an Australian salesman's recollections of the 1968 Paris riots and a son's tribute to a Chilean man killed in the '80s by the military junta) to expose the manipulable facets of narrative convention.

Every detail of the main work, Rooney's 27-minute 'La Décision Doypack' (pictured) – from its pseudo-French title to the stylistic anomalies of the theatrical set and its inhabitants – is key. Filmic/audio action pitch and roll to the tune of a single disembodied Aussie voice between hard fact, diaristic conjecture and evidence of the means through which they have been recorded. Using actors, props, a hybrid musical score and numerous film-editing techniques, Rooney has animated the memoir of a retired food packaging-company manager, whose 1968 trip to Paris (to secure the Doypack range of 'gusset-bottomed' products) happened to coincide with the violent student-police clash.

But – here's the twist – the narrator is recounting a version of the event as recalled during an am-dram class for the purpose of keeping his mind focused while sitting perfectly still in front of a film camera. Rooney's clever play between elements is reminiscent of how the brain receives and interprets information: acted sequences, self-made songs and recollections of dreams, objects, conversations and smells are layered close enough, at times, to become a clichéd interpretation of mental white noise.

The success of this piece is underscored by Rooney's ability to maintain an analytical perspective as maker, for he appears to flirt with but never actually fall for the charms of his chosen media. Allusions to past eras of broadcasting remind us of how technology facilitates and alters the telling of history. The first rollercoaster ride through the film feels fractured, as if temporarily afflicted with extra-sensory powers. But by the second, Rooney's multi-perspective narrative structures acquire enough referential flesh to leave compelling breadcrumb trails around the politics of information and the human condition.

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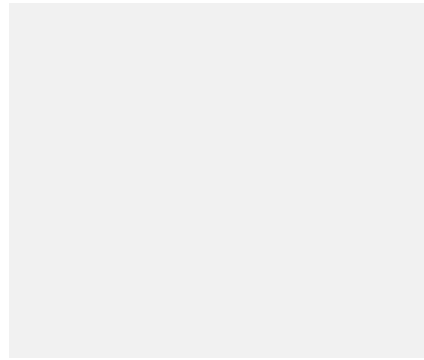
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020 8983 1771

Category: [Bethnal Green to Hackney](#)

Times: Wed-Sun 12noon-6pm

Tube: [Mile End](#) 

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