

David Cotterrell: Car Culture (v)

Date: 7th October 2001

Materials:

DVD Loop, 60 mins

A camera installed in the back of Cotterrell's car records the actions of fellow road users during a 2000 mile road trip

Car Culture filmed a non-consenting driving public as Cotterrell covered over two thousand miles of UK motorways in his Volvo 340. Recording tail-gaiters antics as he drove between 70 and 80 miles an hour in the passing lane, Cotterrell used suction cups to attach a video camera to the interior of his car windscreen. With the lens pointing to the rear window, he was able to start and stop filming while still driving. The rationale behind the editing of Car Culture dictated that, if an approaching cars license plate were close enough to be read, the footage would qualify for inclusion in the work. All participating vehicles are credited, with their individual licence plate details appearing before they make their entrance onto Cotterrells playfully malevolent stage.

Accompanied by Stravinskys The Rite of Spring, a composition frequently attributed with the birth of the Modern age, Cotterrells work can be read as a study of the current state of Modernism. Stravinskys atonal, rhythmically ambiguous and repetitive work enraged its Parisian audience at its premiere in 1913, where the cacophony of the orchestra was eventually drowned out by the abusive shrieks from the stalls.

The aggressive and occasionally violent behaviour Cotterrell encountered during his motorway filming is captured for a 21st century audience addled with Post-modern disconnection and dystopia. But within this potential misery, there is a sense of enchantment: as the car bounces from one tiny bump to the next, the view from the rear window is oddly calm, despite the flashing lights and raised fists. We watch the world moving backwards, and, like children on a long journey home, become transfixed. The film and its appropriated score inform response to the work and the death throes of the orchestration are accompanied by the real-time death of Cotterrells 1989 Volvo as its prop shaft shears in two just outside Glasgow. The car was subsequently towed 411 miles to an East London wreckers.



White Van Man Credit: David Cotterrell (2001)



Sports Hatch Credit: David Cotterrell (2001)