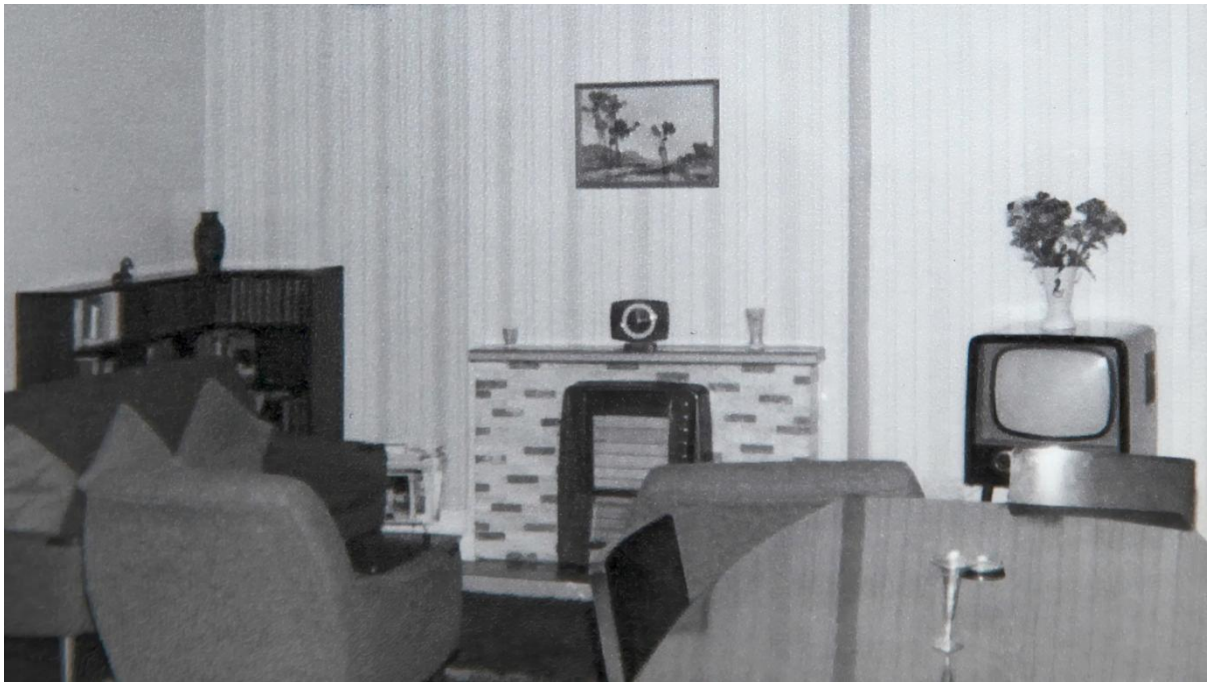
HUMBER
STREET
GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

Unseen Images Exhibition and UNTHINKABLE Film Festival Launch



Exhibition Launch
Tuesday 6 October 2026, 6-9pm
Humber Street Gallery, Hull.

Print and broadcast media are invited to contact bronte.teal@humberstreetgallery.co.uk with requests for interview.

- **New retrospective of filmmaker and video artist John Smith plus experimental films from underground filmmakers, bedroom creatives and visual expressionists as part of UNTHINKABLE Film Festival.**
- **Exhibition and UNTHINKABLE Film Festival launch: Tuesday 6 October 2026, from 6pm, Humber Street Gallery.**
- **Exhibition Dates: Wednesday 7 October – Sunday 15 November 2026**

UNTHINKABLE Film Festival and Humber Street Gallery are proud to present a new retrospective of renowned British avant-garde filmmaker and video artist John Smith, *Unseen Images*.

The exhibition, which builds on the partnership between the city's dynamic festival celebrating short filmmaking, contemporary art and sonic culture and this bold, progressive art gallery brings the work of the legendary artist to Hull, alongside curated screenings of other experimental short films. It also marks the official launch of the festival's core programme, which runs from Tuesday 6 October to Sunday 11 October.

John Smith's films are distinctive not only for their blend of everyday observation, playfulness and humour but also for their blurring of the lines between documentary and fiction. His work, which spans five decades, has been exhibited at prestigious institutions like the Tate, MoMA New York, and the ICA London.

John Smith films featured in the exhibition include *The Girl Chewing Gum*, the most famous of Smith's works featuring an authoritative voice-over which seems to direct people and traffic on a busy London Street, *Being John Smith*, which explores identity, legacy and mortality, *The Black Tower*, a striking narrative about an ominous water tower, and *Associations*, which uses the ambiguities inherent in the English language to sets language against itself: with image and word working together/against each other to destroy/create meaning.

Alongside the work of this legendary director, *Unseen Images* will showcase short films from underground filmmakers, bedroom creatives, and visual expressionists. Rejecting conventional narrative structures, these works use editing and the moving image in much the same way as an artist uses a brush, creating images and experiences rarely seen elsewhere.

Films by Jacob Lee (*A Drifting Up*), Maria Bernardi (*Room 173*), and Whammy Alcazaren (*Water Sports*) are just a few of the highlights from more than 20 experimental films to be selected for the exhibition.

In an industry often dominated by commercialism and high production values, this programme seeks not only to demonstrate that powerful filmmaking can be created with nothing more than a cheap camera and a strong idea, but also that this stripped-back, grounded approach often produces the most groundbreaking work. It is here that you'll find the tricks and techniques that may become defining features of cinema a decade from now.

UNTHINKABLE Film Festival has always aimed to blur the boundary between fine art and cinema, championing films that exist in the space

between the two disciplines and bridging the gap between the gallery and the screening room. The festival's partnership with Humber Street Gallery provides the perfect platform for this exciting exhibition which promises to introduce vibrant new filmmaking as well as bringing Smith's work to new audiences.

For wider programme, please visit the UNTHINKABLE Film Festival website: www.unthinkablefilmfestival.com

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Notes for Editors

Images

Images are available upon request.

About Humber Street Gallery
Humber Street Gallery is a contemporary visual arts gallery in Hull, presenting a year-round programme of exhibitions and supporting activity that invites people to stay curious and engage with art in thoughtful, unexpected and accessible ways. The gallery works with artists at all stages of their careers to commission and present ambitious new work, alongside talks, events and creative activities that encourage curiosity, conversation and deeper ways of looking.

The gallery is operated by Absolutely Cultured, a charity rooted in Hull that believes creativity plays an essential role in wellbeing, connection and everyday life. Alongside its exhibition programme, Humber Street Gallery is a welcoming public space, with a café and programme of activity designed to make contemporary art feel open, relevant and part of the city's cultural life.

Absolutely Cultured works closely with artists, communities and partners to ensure Humber Street Gallery remains a place for discovery, shared experiences and creative exchange.

Media information

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