

# Events



## All Things Are Yours

Debra Welch, Chelsea Space

16 St John Islip Street, SW1P 4JU

Until 31 May 2019

Like the East German photographer Christian Richter, who started to record abandoned buildings after the Wall came down, Debra Welch decided to make a video essay of her old school in Portsmouth, when she heard it was going to close and be demolished.

She visited the building while it was still operational but after school hours, so it is seen as unpeopled and 'at rest.' Her film is both evocative and nostalgic, and most viewers will resonate to the sheer ordinariness of such familiar objects as coat-hooks, a broken basket-ball net or painted lines on the gym floor. King Richard School, previously Paulsgrove Secondary Modern Boys and Girls School, had been at the heart of the community for over 60 years, and Welch wanted to record a collective memory through imagery and conversations with former pupils, staff and families, before it was gone for ever. Long carpeted corridors, redolent of the Overlook Hotel in *The Shining*, lines of stackable plastic chairs in Assembly, hopscotch squares in the playground, all say 'school'. Occasionally we glimpse the outside world through windows (gazing out of the window

is a pastime every schoolchild ends up doing), which offers us the only movement, that of swaying branches, as though the whole place will be taken over by greenery. *All Things Are Yours* is a motto taken from one of the school emblems, and is a slightly opaque line from St Paul, writing in Corinthians, preceded by 'Let no one boast in men'. Since making the film, the school has totally gone, and, as Welch says, 'the land on which it once lived totally grown over as if it was never there to start.' Welch has succeeded in making a slice of living history, in a series of familiar vignettes, experienced by anybody who ever went to school, which is probably just about everybody.

Don Grant