**AMC OPENING INTRO TO TANNERY SCREENING, SEPTEMBER 11TH 2014**

Thank-you for being here this evening. This event marks the first ever screening of ***‘Treatment for Six Characters”,*** so this is the beginning of the process of sending the work out into the world. I’d also like to thank my hosts **Tannery Arts** & the staff at the **Drawing Room**. I believe **Andrew Bick**, who really initiated this event, wants to speak a little after the screening?

A little over 2 years ago I sat before a panel at the British School at Rome (BSR) & said I wanted to go to Rome to make a work that took as its subject an un-realised film Italian writer, Luigi Pirandello, wished to make during the last 10 years of his life. This was to respond to Pirandello’s most famous work, the play ‘***Six Characters in Search of An Author’****,* which premiered at **Teatro Valle**, Rome’s oldest working theatre, in 1921. That evening was a disaster for Pirandello, so up-set were the audience they threw coins at him. The play began with a rehearsal for a traditional play that is suddenly interrupted by a family who make the extraordinary claim they are not actors but ‘characters’ invented by an author who abandoned them. They refuse the leave the stage until their story is told. Pirandello’s film was to depict a fictionalized version of the time leading to his play, underpinning this was an exploration of the ethics of the creative process. Pirandello’s film concludes with a fictionalized account of the premiere of his play so that together the two works form a kind of loop across time, connected by the stage at Teatro Valle.

In order for me to do this I needed to gain access to Pirandello’s home in Rome, which you will see. Also, a fashion atelier, which turned out to be the most difficult place for me to access in Rome, in the end one of the most historic Haute Couture ateliers the Micol Fontana Foundation helped, for which I have to thank **Cristina Giusti** who is here this evening. I didn’t dare think I would gain access to the theatre. But then Berlusconi made plans to close Teatro Valle & so outraged were the actors, managers & technicians that took it over, occupying it & living in it, establishing a radical organization, ‘**Teatro Valle Bene Comune’,** literally for ‘the common good’. This gathered international support; Francis Ford Coppola & Zizek got behind them, they won 2 European awards, & Peter Brook went out to work with them. They alsowelcomed me; I filmed in the theatre, worked with their actors & on one memorable morning had complete command of the auditorium & stage, as you will see.

I should say that you both will & will not see Pirandello’s film this evening. I used to joke with the archeologists at the BSR that I viewed the text I was working with as every bit as much as ruin as the buildings and sites they worked with. I worked with a text written in the form of a 1930’s ‘treatment’ for a film studio, really a series of prose paragraphs outlining the plot. I adapted the text, wrote a new prologue & decided take a more oblique approach so that apart from one crucial scene you will not see the actors or scenes literally. I have tried to wrap my film around Pirandello’s absent film, which is nevertheless conjured for you by the imagery but also by the animating voice of veteran Italian actor Norman Mozzato. I should also warn you that the film is in Italian, subtitled in English. As I do not speak Italian this nearly killed me! It is just over 30-minutes long.

This work is part of a larger project. I originally went out to Rome to draw Pirandello’s film, which is happening & will also make a final work which takes another evening as its subject; just after its Rome premiere *Six Characters* went onto premiere in a theatre in Holborn, London in the hands of a avant-garde Russian director fresh from the Russian Revolution. That theatre no longer exists, although the site does. I intend that the work you see this evening, the drawn version, & that final Holborn work will form a kind of triptych.

To conclude, it is worth noting that it turns out that there was only a brief period in time when it was possible to make this work. One month ago **Teatro Valle Bene Commune** were forced out of the theatre by a new major. Although there are plans to sustain the organizational its true to say it now hangs in the balance. So, if I had gone to Rome earlier or was arriving now it would not have been possible to make this work.

That's enough from me! As I said **Andrew Bick** wants to say a few words after the screening, We have some wine & refreshments & I would be delighted to catch-up & answer your questions. You can also see the exhibition **Tanlines** in the galleries next door. One last thing – of course mobile phones off please!