

## JULIE MENERET CONTEMPORARY ART

### JONNY BRIGGS

Julie Meneret Contemporary Art presents the work of Jonny Briggs with the exhibition *Monstrares*. Join us at the opening reception on February 26th at 6pm, where the poet Saskia Hamilton will give a short reading. The exhibition will continue until March 30.

Jonny Briggs is a British conceptual photographer whose work focuses on the latent yet powerful effects of familial memory. Through elaborate staging, he creates uncanny effects that appear digitally manipulated but are in fact three-dimensional scenes. The resulting images seem to drift in from a different reality, where perception is perverted to reveal something menacing below the surface.

The struggle between the individual and society has fascinated Briggs, raised in the British woodlands with four older sisters. The title of the show refers to *monstrare*, the Latin verb “to show” or “to reveal” which has evolved into the word “monster.” The artist asserts that human nature involves contradictory impulses-- to be restrained and well-mannered in order to find societal acceptance and to freely satisfy one’s primal and bodily desires. Guilt and fear keep the animal at bay, and it is perhaps for this reason that “reveal” has come to mean “monster.” Showing, expressing or opening up has become “monstrous,” deviating grotesquely from the norm.

There is something intriguing and even grotesque about the way the body is fragmented in Briggs’ imagery. In his recent work the human figure is all but absent, yet traces of life haunt the images. Wallpaper panels in *Monstrare* and *The Cage* provide a domestic context in which a figure lurks, trapped in a repeating pattern that renders a subject invisible. The viewer looks into a blank void penetrated by a single pointer finger in *Looking*, riffing on the way that desire to touch has been covertly motivating visual imagery throughout art history.

His most recent project involved casting his childhood home with latex to create life-sized molds that he then photographed emptied of their original support. Space is physically collapsed and doubly indexed by this process. Flattening the surfaces of his memories, Briggs’ photographic process, surreal and abreactive, echoes the warped visual process of memory itself. Briggs’ works are profoundly personal, registering the artist’s psyche at every moment, yet also pointing to family politics as a microcosm of disturbed behavior.

Briggs has exhibited throughout London, where he lives and works, as well as in continental Europe. He is the recipient of the Saatchi New Sensations Prize, a finalist for the Catlin Art Prize, and has been the subject of much press in publications such as *Aesthetica*, *The Independent*, *Dazed & Confused*, and *The Guardian*.