

Sophia Contemporary

Uncanny Memories

May 11 – June 23, 2018

Sophia Contemporary is proud to present *Uncanny Memories*, a group show of young artists exploring the themes of the uncanny and surrealism through a variety of media. Featuring new and recent work by six artists from the UK, US, and France – Jonathan Baldock, Genesis Belanger, Matthew Hansel, Matt Lipps, Theo Mercier, and Adam Parker Smith – the exhibition reflects on the legacy of surrealism in contemporary art while investigating the notion of the uncanny in reference to the history of art. *Uncanny Memories* will open to the public with a reception from 6-8PM on Thursday, May 10, and will remain on view through June 23, 2018.

The concept of the uncanny was first defined by Sigmund Freud as an experience strangely familiar, confronting the viewer with unconscious, repressed impulses. *Uncanny Memories* will explore this notion through eighteen artworks executed in a variety of media: painting, sculpture, ceramic, mirror work, and photography. From London-based Jonathan Baldock's bronze sculptures and Brooklyn-based Genesis Belanger's porcelain and stoneware works to Paris-based Theo Mercier's photographic collages, the exhibition demonstrates the widespread impact of the uncanny on contemporary artists across media and geography.

All of the artists featured in *Uncanny Memories* are united by a desire to reveal the odd, the strange, the surreal, and the uncanny in our contemporary societies by looking back at the history of art. From the blend of classical imagery and cartoonish elements in Matthew Hansel's paintings to the variety of art historical references in Adam Parker Smith's whimsical sculptures, the use of antique, classical, and modern imagery constitutes a common thread in the exhibition. By looking back at the history of art and reinterpreting it with a surreal, tongue-in-cheek twist, the artists in the show seek to explore our collective unconscious in order to reveal the uncanny memories shaping our present reality.

Jonathan Baldock (b. 1980, UK) is a sculptor, installation, and performance artist. Through work that is often biographical, the artist addresses the trauma, stress, sensuality, mortality, and spirituality around our relationship to the body and the space it inhabits. Using everyday materials in unexpected ways, Baldock's work challenges the physical qualities of ceramic and fabric. By removing the functional aspects of his materials, the artist's sculptural assemblages and performances bring the viewer, the object, and the space they simultaneously occupy into question as a ritual or theatrical act.

Recent solo shows include *There's No Place Like Home*, CGP (The Gallery) & CGP (Dilston Grove), London, UK (2017); *The Biggest Fear Is That Someone Will Crawl Into It*, Space, London, UK (2017), *Jonathan Baldock*, OneWork Gallery, Vienna, Austria (2017); and *The Skin I Live In*, Nicelle Beauchene, NYC, USA (2016). The artist will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Camden Arts Centre in the spring of 2019. Baldock lives and works in London, UK.

Genesis Belanger (b. 1978, USA) creates delicate ceramic sculptures exploring with humour and wit the consumerist nature of contemporary society. Drawing on the language of pop art and surrealism, Belanger's sculptures turn everyday objects such as lamps, cigarettes, and watches into uncanny anthropomorphic artworks that blur the boundaries between function and artifice.

Belanger is a 2016 recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant and a 2017 Pioneer Works Fall/Winter Fellow. Recent exhibitions include *Heap cookie and a Tall Drink of Water*, Mrs Gallery, NYC, USA (2017); *Scarlet street*, Lucien Terras, NYC, USA (2016); and *Happiness and Other Forms of Self Delusion*, Pioneer Works, NYC, USA (2016). She lives and works in Brooklyn, USA.

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Matthew Hansel's (b. 1977, USA) practice playfully assembles varying artistic traditions and tonal registers to create a surreal and immersive visual experience. The artist overlays classical imagery with cartoonish elements on Photoshop before skilfully painting the computer image onto the canvas. The resulting paintings collapse the boundaries between high and low art and bring to life uncanny trompe l'oeil figures at the confluence of traditional painting and digital wizardry.

Hansel's work has been shown at Gagosian Gallery, Athens, Greece; Yuka Contemporary, Tokyo, Japan; Paul Kasmin Gallery, NYC, USA; The Hole Gallery, NYC, USA; The Lodge Gallery, NYC, USA; Wasserman Projects, Detroit, MI, USA; The Art Center, Martinsburg, WV, USA; Cerasoli Gallery, Culver City, CA, USA; and Hooper Projects, Los Angeles, CA, USA, among others. He lives and works in Brooklyn, USA.

Matt Lipps' (b. 1975, USA) practice explores our collective memory by creating uncanny photographs that blur the boundaries between high and low artistic registers. The artist culls images referring to both art history and popular culture from photographic publications and meticulously arranges the disparate cut-outs before photographing them. The resulting images create a dream-like, carefully staged narrative that explore our collective unconscious while investigating the nature of contemporary photography.

Lipps' works are part of many public collections, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA; The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; and Pilara Foundation Collection/ Pier 24, San Francisco, USA. He lives and works in Los Angeles, USA.

Theo Mercier (b. 1984, France) creates tongue-in-cheek sculptural and photographic assemblages of collaged images and found objects that playfully collapse the boundaries between high and low art, craft and industry, past and present, Western and non-Western cultures. By creating uncanny artworks that subtly subvert the original historical and cultural context of their source material, the artist explores the intersection of anthropology, ethnography, geopolitics, and tourism with a surreal and humorous perspective.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Théo Mercier, Pièces Rapportées*, Musée de l'Homme, Paris, France (2017); *Legado fantasma*, Marso Galería de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico (2017); *Gold War Wall*, Museo Experimental El Eco, Mexico City, Mexico (2017); *Tomorrow's ghosts*, Michael Fuchs Galerie, Berlin, Germany (2017); *Panorama Zero*, Galerie Bugada & Cargnel, Paris, France (2017) and *The Thrill Is Gone*, Musée d'art contemporain, Marseille, France (2016). Mercier lives and works in Paris and Mexico City.

Adam Parker Smith (b. 1978, USA) investigates both popular culture and art history by creating surreal artworks that frontally challenge the definition of high art and conventional taste. The artist's humorous sculptures draw from a wide variety of source materials from both low and high cultural registers: popular imagery, toys, kitsch paraphernalia mixed with ancient cultural artefacts and modernist archetypes. The resulting uncanny sculptural collages highlight the sustained collapse between highbrow and lowbrow artistic registers in a contemporary society increasingly defined by a profusion of consumerist imagery.

Recent exhibitions include *Kidnapping Incites Years of Murderous Doom*, The Hole Gallery, NYC, USA (2017); *The Cut* (with Eric Shaw), Ever Gold Projects, San Francisco, USA (2016); *Oblivious the Greek*, The Hole Gallery, New York, USA (2016); *Indefinite Free Time* (with Robert Chase Heshman), LVL3, Chicago, USA (2014); and *Seriously*, Ever Gold Gallery, San Francisco, USA (2014). Parker Smith lives and works in Brooklyn, USA.

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Exhibition Details

Title: *Uncanny Memories*
Address: Sophia Contemporary Gallery, 11 Grosvenor Street, London, W1K 4QB, UK
Website: www.sophiacontemporary.com
Dates: 11 May 2018 – 23 June 2018
Private View: 6 – 8 pm, 10 May 2018
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm, Saturday 11 am to 5pm
Admission: Free
Travel: Green Park, Bond Street or Oxford Circus Tube Station
Twitter: @SophiaCGallery
Facebook: SophiaContemporaryGallery
Instagram: SophiaContemporaryGallery

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