

**JONNY BRIGGS**  
*COMFORTABLE IN MY SKIN*

Opening: Monday 20 April, 2015 | 6.30 pm  
Galleria Marie-Laure Fleisch | Via di Pallacorda 15 | Rome  
from 20 April to 13 June 2015

Galleria Marie-Laure Fleisch presents *Comfortable in My Skin*, the first solo exhibition in Rome of the British artist Jonny Briggs (London, 1985). On show, a selection of works created from 2010 and 2014 that trace the artist's most recent creative voyage focused on the urgency to rediscover himself by analysing his own childhood. Briggs favours photography and through this medium, he reconstructs a symbolic representation of his family relations and the roles played by each member; he crystallises events and familiar places with irony in an attempt to free himself from past discomfort to achieve greater awareness of himself as an adult.

With the complicity of his parents, he stages surreal events to tell the story of ancestral bonds and difficult relationships; he uses photography to create complex works which call into play performance, scenography, sculpture and painting. Starting from the small work which titles the exhibition, *Comfortable in My Skin*, the artist is depicted with his head trapped in his father's shirt; with an exhausted expression, the artist's father seems to be giving birth to his adult son. In  *Holding*, it is the artist's mother who has her head covered with a man's shirt while her body—artificially suspended from a wall—simulates a domestic crucifixion in an emblematic representation of the sacrificial role of the woman. Briggs chooses the family home in its English county setting for his simulations, and which sometimes become the absolute protagonist with its gaudy wallpaper and bric-a-brac accumulated over the years. This is a presence that the artist lives like something real and cumbersome, something that absorbed his childhood and was guardian of his secrets. The work *The Home* synthesises this vision; a large-sized photograph shows a skin-tone coloured vinyl mould of a kitchen removed from its normal position and spread out over a field. Indeed, the home represents the artist's second skin that he would like to lose because he finds it a heavy and suffocating creature but unavoidably, he realises that this is still his refuge. The worrying atmosphere of the photographs cohabit with the artist's visible attachment for this ambience. This explicit and powerful contrast is seen in *Smiling Inside*, in which Briggs dons a monstrous mask which shows the serious face of his father on the outside but depicts his own smiling face on the inside; contemporaneously the body is wrapped tightly in a flowery sheet rather like the patterned furnishings of the house, a further reference to the morbid comfort of this condition.

Veritable paradoxes and indistinct divisions between true and false are continuously found in his work, only to reveal the pretence or make-believe at the end. Like in *Trompe l'Oeil*, a specially-built double illusion of a corner of a room with a flower vase and fruit basket coated with magnolia coloured paint, or *Heirloom*, the hammer of the artist's carpenter grandfather next to a perfect reproduction in foam rubber. An exhibition on the duality between human nature and family culture, between illusion and reality in which Jonny Briggs attempts to delineate the contrasts and the suffering faced in the passage between childhood and maturity.

**Jonny Briggs** (London, 1985) lives and works in London.

Among the most important shows: Fondazione Fotografia Modena, (upcoming); *Work in Progress*, Camden Arts Centre, London (2015); *Florilegia*, Grimaldi Gavin, London (2015); Foam Talent, l'Atelier Néerlandais, Paris (2014); *Monstrares*, Julie Meneret, New York (2014); *Family Politics*, Jerwood Space, London (2014); *The Future Can Wait*, Victoria House, London (2014); *Utopie Distribuée*, White Project, Paris (2013); *Out of Focus: Photography*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2012); *The Way we live now*, The Design Museum, London (2011); Moscow Young Artist Biennale, Moscow (2010). He is among the finalists of Photobook Melbourne Photography Prize 2015 and was nominated in several awards, among which: First Book Award (2015); Foam Talent (2014); Paul Huf Award (2014); Aesthetica Art Prize (2014); Jove Foundation International Art Prize (2012); The Catlin Prize (2012); Prix Leica (2010); International Photography Awards, Honorable Mention (2009); Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait (2009); Ovenden Contemporary, First prize (2009); Compello Art & Saatchi Photography, Winner (2008). Among the collections: Zabloudowicz Collection, London; Saatchi Gallery, London.