PRESS RELEASE

JOHN RAINEY

Hyper Activity: Scenes From An Other Reality

7 February to 16 March 2013

John Rainey's uncanny sculptures reflect on existential questions, in particular those posed in a society where individuals have become increasingly familiar with a mutable notion of identity. One of the frequently cited causes for such a change in our sense of being is the advent of social networking media, from online gaming to Twitter and Facebook – providing a range of reasons to enter into virtual worlds and, in the process, to generate a flow of highly subjective information in the creation of a hyperreal self.

Rainey’s investigation takes in how images, their reproduction and our synthetic identity are represented and transmitted by such media. Starting with a photographic image, he distorts and rescales it, using software to produce a hybrid representation, caught between the digital and the physical. In the following stages plaster prototypes are produced by means of high definition 3D printers and rapid prototyping machines, before being finally translated into porcelain. Objects that emerge from his artistic process subvert classical form, oscillating between two and three-dimensions. His use of vibrant colour corresponds to a desire to achieve an ‘aesthetic of synthetics’.

He refers to the resulting figures – variously humanoid or embryonic cyborg – as ‘Sculptural hyperbodies and Prosthetic others’. His notion of a hyperreal body picks up on our increasing inability to differentiate between reality and its simulations. His use of the term ‘Prosthetic’ is metaphorical, used to designate a re-conception of human experience in the light of advanced technologies, such as those put forward in posthuman or cyborg theory. In these we are asked to consider the implications on human consciousness of a wide variety of contemporary possibilities and circumstances, from those arising from body part replacement surgery to the ability of modern media to instil curiously vivid memories of events that we did not directly experience.

The installation as a whole carries ideas of multiplicity, observation and self-editing, ideas familiar from our engagement with virtual worlds. Arrested from another social space, Rainey’s extraordinary sculptures exist as snapshots of our activities and practices within the virtual realm.

This new body of work is supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland’s National Lottery fund.

John Rainey (born 1985) studied at Manchester Metropolitan University (2006-2009) and at the Royal College of Art (2010-2012). His work has been exhibited in the 2009 British Ceramics Biennial, Stoke-on-Trent; The Salone Internazionale del Mobile, Milan, 2012; and the Santorini Biennale of Arts 2012. Newly commissioned work will feature as part of the 2013 Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture programme, funded by The Culture Company 2013.

Marsden Woo Project Space is curated by Tessa Peters.

The Marsden Woo Project Space is a space for experimental new work in art, craft and design and runs alongside our established programme of solo and small group exhibitions by gallery artists. The Project Space allows us to respond quickly to significant bodies of innovative work, particularly that of talented emerging artists and designers, as well as fresh directions in the work of more established artists. The exhibitions are organized at short notice, so please check our website regularly for news on forthcoming shows and events.

For more information, images or to arrange an interview with the artist please contact Siobhan Feeney or Tatjana Marsden. Telephone: +44(0)20 7336 6396 Email: press@marsdenwoo.com