

Piper Keys
Exhibitions

Manuela Gernedel
Snakes

16th June to 15th July
Opening view: Friday 15th June, 6 to 9pm

I've been expecting you. To find your way home. Fragile as earth viewed from space. Like Cixous. Who set sail from her forbidden mother, to a country which both welcomed and rejected. Don't ask the earth to grant you freedom. Noblesse oblige. A sign is rising. As you leave your planetarium. Dream, if you can, a courtyard. We were born in fields. Our doors are always open. This house is a tool for dismantling mastery. There's always room for an extra place at the table. A small goblin, called a brownie, lives in this house. Don't insult it, or the brownie will play tricks. Instead, feed it milk. Brownies love milk. It will perform household tasks while you're asleep.

*Hold your thumb and forefinger at right angles. And frame the moment. Two forks, arms crossed, like Martha Rosler in a still from a black and white videotape. The tasseography of the unremarkable. A future revealed in the traces left behind. I make sacrifices and practice haruspicy. Bloodstains can be removed with toothpaste, but ectoplasm is another matter. In a house of many stories. We create endless scenes. And like stories, we are related. And like stories, we may turn out differently than expected.**

Piper Keys presents new ceramics and drawings by Manuela Gernedel.

A group of oversized fetuses are moulded in clay, each resting with eyes closed as if dreaming. Conceived by the artist as 'psychological objects,' their half-formed bodies are glazed in lurid fleshy tones and bear the oversized heads of old men. This community of fetuses hints towards a contradiction in collectivity, each existing within a group but individually isolated in their own psychic space. Coiling umbilical cords encircle the babies and suggest the enclosure of the womb, yet outside their in utero environment they are not fully autonomous, each restricted by the link to their bloody supply pumping from a placenta base.

The artist exports further forms of social reproduction from her own household via a series of drawings of a kitchen sink. Reproduced in coloured pencil from a catalogue of cameraphone photos, these un-staged snapshots observe cutlery and kitchenware haphazardly arranged in incidental combinations of colour, shape and texture. The silver outline of the sink basin replicates the frame of the camera lens. The drawings cumulatively speak of the material debris of everyday life, taking objects we unintentionally surround ourselves with and methodically reproducing them in the studio. Although distinct in form, both bodies of work invoke an abstract sense of circulation: the circadian rhythm of domestic labour, the circulatory process of a life cycle, and the movement of blood around the body.

* Text by J. A. Harrington

Piper Keys is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Piper Keys will run an independent programme from its current location at the invitation of Raven Row through to Autumn 2019.

Gallery opening hours 12noon to 6pm, Friday to Sunday
Entrance through 58a Artillery Lane

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