

BILLY SMITH MORRIS

CV

Education

2015-2016

Art Foundation Course, Sussex Coast College, Hastings.

2016-2019

BA Fine Art & History of Art, Goldsmiths, London.

2019-2022

Royal Academy Schools postgraduate programme, Royal Academy of Arts, London.

Exhibitions

Group

2015 - September Art Exhibition, Bursary Winner, Sussex.

2016 - THIS WAY UP, Hastings.

2017 - Valentines Slump, Harts Lane Gallery, London.

No Naked Flames I, London - co-curator.

2018 - No Naked Flames II, London - co-curator.

NX1, Euston, as part of Young Modulus collective.

BIRTHDAY ZERO - Vevey, Switzerland

The Witnessed and the Witnesses - collaborative show with William Bartlett as part of Deptford X Festival.

2019 - Goldsmiths BA Degree Show, London.

Get Cosy, Safehouse 2, London.

Artist Statement

My practice is based in material and image; using a number of crafts from across cultures, stolen and scrambled to form a microcosm. It seeks an immediate response from the viewer - there is a familiarity in the mediums used, not in the everyday, but in the collective unconscious. A triggered social memory in the grandeur of Roman baths, or the power of a nation's crest. The pieces are often very tactile in their form, and I use styles of making usually associated with the ornamental.

Much of the comfort found in referencing familiar, the decorative and ornamental I disrupt by the content of the image and the dialogue between the works; the realisation of a more complex narrative. In my work I question what it means to be male, what it means to identify with a group of people or nation and where the realms of fantasy and reality blur.

Recurring figures, logos and motifs allude to a feeling of something to belong to - not that the viewer would want to be a part of it. This gives way to the question of control, hierarchy and power. The pregnant male as thief, the pub landlord as priest, the map as a spinning compass. The pieces often resemble flags, banners or badges; symbols used by clubs or societies to mark themselves out as a collective. My practice explores why individuals, in the contemporary world, feel such a need to belong to a distinct,

definable community; and furthermore why these groups seek to regress to a point that many believe we have grown past.

More recently my work, and its ideas of belonging, can be seen as a response to contemporary political and social shifts such as the contemporary revival of esoterism, conspiracy culture and nationalism, a building of 'alternative facts'. I believe this culture of distrust and uncertainty stems directly from a growth in the culture of individualism, facilitated by the internet marketing each person as a unique and isolated being. My work is presenting this fictionalising back to the viewer, a world simplistic on appearance yet as contradictory and distrustful as what they are trying to escape - a club which no one can be a member of, as it does not truly exist.