

**Hannah Barry Gallery Peckham London**  
**22 January - 27 February 2015**

**We are excited to present three new exhibitions in the space at 4 Holly Grove**

**James Capper** *TOOLS OF THE TRADE*, **Rob Sherwood** *The Mercury Room & Oliver Griffin* *Theory in Failure (Sequence one): The Daguerreotype and The Laser print. How we never learn from photographic history, just repeat it in digital formats.*

**James Capper's** *TOOLS OF THE TRADE* is an elaboration of a sculptural language we first had sight of in his Hydraulic Power Tools for the group show *Fabricators* at our gallery in 2010, and which he pursued again in a second display of work in this "division" for the Armory Show in New York (2012). The *NIPPER* and *NIPPER LONG REACH* sculptures shown in these presentations were the founding elements of a substantial family of sculpture defined by its distinct double "jaw" drawn soon after in 2012. The titles and forms of these new sculptures are inspired by the living world of reptiles, insects and birds. However considered in action their hydraulically controlled "teeth" - a term we now happily associate with James' sculpture - demonstrate cutting and rapid fracturing capacities that seem entirely at the service of an industrial application.

James Capper's art adopts the techniques, materials and complex problem-solving processes of innovation and engineering. As we see in *TOOLS OF THE TRADE*, his sculptures evolve along different modular chains he terms as 'Divisions'. Each work might be understood as a prototype. As has been proven here in the case of the Nipper Family each sculpture produces questions that the next work attempts to answer, so that over time each 'division' produces its own iconography. Traditional frames of sculptural reference are radically revisited, and if real-time technological advances in heavy industry fall behind or advance ahead of Capper's own creations, in their unique arrangement of ergonomics, hydraulics and aesthetics, his works exist autonomously.

**Rob Sherwood's** exhibition *The Mercury Room* brings together paintings in the making for the past two years. Rob departed his old methodologies - with their rigorous roots in the grid, the behaviour of light and colour in glazing, and limited brushwork - relaxing into a freer state of mind where he has been able to develop the material which provides a foundation for the attitude of these new works. His paintings seem on first view miscellaneous and hermetic - fragments of literary, symbolic, and historical content and broken personal souvenirs - held together by a scaffold of careful, thoughtful painting.

To decipher the tentative codifications of Rob's new world we should begin with his expedient archive. There is no labelled index or meticulous order to his material but the information collected serves as an aid to times past as well as a document of his own experiences and of others around him. Like for many of us, the habit of collecting information forces the consideration of how the line of thought changes, and memory with it. One of his archives lives entirely online, and it is this thread or chain around which the works in the exhibition orbit.

Rob's online archive aimed to distill traces of the human voice from the glare of mass-circulated imagery, junk email and workplace exchanges. In particular he wanted to preserve those snippets of communication he felt revealed states of emotional and psychological well-being. Rob shared with us a few notes lifted from Alice Oswald which go some way to further illuminate the circle of process and intention he has constructed for his art: "*There's so much talk of digital this and digital that but there is still nothing like the physical fact of*

*a human offering you something.*" And so knowing all this, we are better equipped for the mercurial game of hide and seek the artist has us play.

To understand the new photographic works by **Oliver Griffin** that make up his exhibition *Theory in Failure (Sequence one):The Daguerreotype and The Laser print. How we never learn from photographic history, just repeat it in digital formats.*, one can only start from the beginning and in his own words:

"Each Image is a single sheet of 10x8" Rollei Orthochromatic 25iso film stock. Exposed 3mins with a Wista 10x8" large format camera to the correct exposure and developed with a series of Iford chemicals at the correct agitation rate and times. These techniques of photographic reproduction have not changed since the start of the 20th Century. But negatives are fragile and photographers are even more fragile (the nature of this medium is that in order to control the image, you have to control life, I sadly do not have that. The people that enter into the image are not what I wanted. So the art of negative retouching was brought in to destroy all elements that were not needed using the following tools: scalpel blade, lighter, shoe and tarmac... These damaged the negative creating the unconventional effects seen in the final images; therefore these negatives can also be seen as stress release on photographs that were not necessarily meant to be released to the public...).

These negatives are now scanned at 3200dpi which takes 9mins to create a 1.64GB digitized file of the image. They are then directly laser printed onto aluminum with a VULET ink and a clear TIGER 019/00600 polyurethane is applied to protect the image. This all sounds very modern, but in fact the theory dates back to the 19th Century with the Daguerreotype. Printing directly on to a metallic surface that reflects light in order to capture an image is nothing new, but rarely used in this day and age due to functionality.

The combination of the traditional photographic theory and the practice of digital processes to produce this work makes me think about changes within this medium within a lifetime of photographic education. Trying to understand the philosophy and practice of this medium that is ever changing. But as human beings we only fail and we never learn from photographic history, just repeat it in digital formats."

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