

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

Press Release

POLLY MORGAN

Come The End

THE BOX

2 – 31 May 2014

Private View

Thursday 1 May, 6-8pm



Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present a new commission in *The Box* by British artist Polly Morgan. Upturning prevailing attitudes towards taxidermy, the artist uses animals as raw materials within her work. Essentially, the artist uses their remains to play out dark, macabre narratives which tap into the uncanny. Directly confronting death, Morgan's sculptures manifest an innate curiosity into the internal mechanisms of the body. For the first time, the artist will unveil the underlying artifice of the taxidermy process in *The Box*.

Resembling a zoological display case, the work features a taxidermied python wound tightly around a gnarled, wooden branch. Unlike previous incarnations of *The Box*, Morgan has chosen to break out of the confines of the project space; embroiled together, both the snake and the branch emerge through a crack in the glass as if they have bludgeoned their way out.

Unusually, the snake is anatomically incomplete: dangling on a sinuous piece of skin, part of the body remains lifeless and flat whilst the rest is flawlessly lifelike. Here, Morgan has stopped stitching in order to reveal the wood, wire and thread interior. Similarly, the branch gradually transitions from looking like wood to fibreglass, with artificial fibres sticking haphazardly out of the end. Here, we see the experimental nature of Morgan's deployment of taxidermy in full force.

Discussing the work, Morgan explains that: 'the branch and snake combination subtly alludes to a phallus, whilst *The Box* (conveniently also a slang term for) to a vagina. To me it's a reflection on the dismantling of a relationship; tightly bound and seemingly authentic to start with, unraveled and raw at the end.'

Perched at the tip of the wire, a taxidermied starling stares inquisitively at the viewer whilst clutching a small piece of stuffing in its beak. Whilst the snake and branch may come to an end, both physically and symbolically, the bird suggests a renewal of life by using materials from the taxidermy process to line its nest.

Polly Morgan (b. 1980) lives and works in London. Past exhibitions include those at New Art Gallery, Walsall; Haunch of Venison, London; White Cube, London; Robilant + Voena, Milan; Warrington Museum and Art Gallery, Warrington; Pallant House, Chichester and Other Criteria, London. Her work is featured in numerous international collections including the Thomas Olbricht Collection, Berlin; Zabudowicz Collection, London; New Art Gallery, Walsall and the David Roberts Art Foundation, London. Morgan's work will be featured in forthcoming shows at Nevada Museum of Art, USA and Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

Upcoming: 6 June 2014 – 5 July 2014

Rachel Goodyear

Muzzles and Murmurs, Main Gallery