

PRESS RELEASE**Harley Weir*****Sins of a daughter*****9 April — 7 May 2022**

Sins of a daughter brings together a selection of new and radical images by Harley Weir. Moving viscerally from the obscure to the explicit, the rapturous to the profane, the exhibition features unseen work revisited from her personal archive alongside experimental pieces made during the last three years. Through a combination of her signature visual intensity and fluid approach to image-making, these images evoke an immediate and arresting world, familiar to us and filled with emotion, yet suggestive of a darker and more compulsive set of psychic and material forces. A world in which the body is turned inside out, in which images take on an unnamed agency and where the transformative and spectral effects of desire, anger, ecstasy and turmoil leave an indelible mark on the retina of the eye and mind.

Comprising intimate and sensual impressions of the human form alongside anarchic gestures of light, colour and expressive mark-making, *Sins of a daughter* evokes a shifting emotional architecture that runs riot through conventional forms of image making. This unruly sensation is felt not only in the eerie and alluring photography that serves as the basis for the exhibition—filled with masked characters, glimpses of nudity, genitalia and organic life—but through a variety of photographic and painterly techniques that include photo collage, double exposure, scanning, digital manipulation and physical defacement, experiments pushed to their limit in the darkroom with processes that range from the inclusion of bodily fluids, waste and unknown chemicals, to unpredictable combinations of toners, fixers and developing agents.

Through this new approach, an emergent principle is immanent to the works, inviting the materials themselves to take over and influence the outcome of the final image. Warm and enveloping fields of colour meet erratic, violent etchings applied directly to the image surface, like wild scratches carved into bark. Adorned with lacings of perfume and nail polish, dark and enigmatic forms oscillate from harmony to discord, attraction to repulsion—a juxtaposition echoed in both her dark and bitten, iridescent frames, which speak equally to the ravages of lust and sex as they do to a primal and ancient hunger. Through these methodologies, Weir refracts and complicates the—at times direct, at times near-subliminal—visual codes of gender, youth, classicism and trauma that are evoked in the images. Roland Barthes would call this sense of shock in photography the punctum—a prick or wound.

Seen not only in the ambiguity of Weir's charged and erotic forms, but in the material fissures of light and distortion that colour and sharpen their affective tone, *Sins of a daughter* plays with this sense of shock to articulate an original and authentic beauty. Filled with courage, intricacy and depth, it is a subversive and arresting visual language that speaks to the anxious and obsessive world of youth, personality, the human body and love, drawing from sources as wide as the unconscious, pop culture and art history to tease, provoke and draw us in. Their freedom and power as images is further crystallised through the disruptive potential of matter, chance and serendipity, catalysing their semiotic world with newfound colour, intensity and dynamism.

Harley Weir (b. 1988, Surrey, UK) lives and works in London. In 2010 she graduated from Central St Martins with a BA in Fine Art. Solo exhibitions of her work include *Walls* at MEP, Paris FR (2020); *Homes* at Fabrica Gallery, Brighton Photo Biennial, Brighton UK (2018); and *Boundaries* at Foam, Amsterdam NL (2017). Recent group exhibitions include *Girls Girls Girls*, Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford, Ireland IE (2022); *Old Friends, New Friends*, Collective Ending HQ, London UK (2021); *Crowd*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London UK (2020); *CLAY*, T J Boulting, London UK (2020); *Transformer: A Rebirth of Wonder*, 180 The Strand, London UK (2019); *rubbish_1*, with Wilson Oryema, Soft Opening, London UK (2022); *The Belly and the Members*, curated by Antonia Marsh at Cob Gallery, London UK (2017). Weir has published four books: *Homes* with Loose Joints (2017), *Paintings* with Loose Joints (2017), *Function* with Baron (2018), and *Father* with IDEA (2019).