

Meliksetian MB Briggs

Todd Gray

Exquisite Terribleness

September 11 - October 18, 2014

Opening Reception:

Thursday, September 11th 6-9pm



Anna Meliksetian and Michael Briggs are pleased to present "Exquisite Terribleness", an exhibition of new works by Los Angeles based artist **Todd Gray**.

Gray's works are comprised of photographs gathered from his own archive and recontextualized via their juxtaposition with one another and the use of antique frames as a structuring device. The current body of work stems from Gray's artistic investigation, begun in 1989 with Alan Sekula at Cal Arts for his MFA thesis exhibition, which focused on Gray's extensive archive of Michael Jackson photographs he took during his time as Jackson's personal photographer in the 1980's. Recent conversations with artist Carrie Mae Weems and film-maker John Akomfrah on the subjects of history, the archive, and the legacy of the late cultural theorist Stuart Hall, led to a reinvestigation of the subject.

In this latest body of work, the fourth examination of this archive, Gray has re-imagined and literally re-framed the photos of Jackson together with his documentary work from Ghana, where he maintains a studio, using weathered, antique frames that once

hung on the walls of homes in South Los Angeles. Gray resists the viewer's desire to see a cohesive and complete likeness of Jackson, showing instead detailed fragments of his body, and juxtaposing them against images of African people and Ghanaian architecture. The framed photos, collaged on the wall, overlap and stack on top of one another, scattered high and low, creating a visual cacophony of low relief, photo-sculpture. This resulting work is autobiographical, and uses the language and signifiers of popular culture and spectacle to draw in the viewer, blurring the boundaries of pop culture and fine art, aesthetics and rational structure and refusing to collapse into a simple binary opposition.

Todd Gray (b. 1954) received both his BFA and MFA from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). He works in multiple formats including photo-based works as well as sculpture and performance. Recent solo and group exhibitions include the Luckman Gallery, Cal State University, Los Angeles, Studio Museum, Harlem, NY, USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, Tucson Museum of Art, Detroit Museum of Art, Renaissance Society, University of Chicago among others. Performance works have been presented at institutions such as the Roy & Edna Disney Cal/Arts Theater, REDCAT, Los Angeles, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, and the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles. A partial list of Gray's work in public collections includes the National Gallery of Canada, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the University of Connecticut and the Studio Museum, Harlem.