

BRIAN GRIFFIN
SPUD!

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26 October – 8 December 2018
Private View: Thursday, 25 October, 6 – 9 PM



Brian Griffin is recognised as one of Britain's most influential photographers, known for his unconventional approach to his work and love of surrealism. MMX Gallery is delighted to present *Brian Griffin: SPUD!*, an exhibition of photographs selected from his recent residency at Labanque Arts Centre in Béthune-Bruay in Northern France.

The idea that influenced Griffin's concept was that his residency was within the Western Front, where British and Commonwealth soldiers were posted during WWI.

In the town of Béthune by coincidence is a large McCain potato factory – one of the largest potato production plants in Europe. This formed the inspiration for the project.

'Around the city, there are massive fields of potatoes, which end up on our plates, McDonald's French fries, you know. Those potatoes grow in soil where bodies and body parts and rivers of human blood have been buried within the soil! So I decided to spend a day or two in this factory. I saw potatoes coming in large trucks and samples being taken. What happens when the soil which we feed from, is also that which houses the blood of thousands of soldiers?'

Griffin's project takes us on a visual journey through historical references reflected in the haunted battlefields of the past to the fictional futurism based in the present time.

An idyllic dream of preindustrial and pre-war landscape is captured in the simple *spud*, the most popular vegetable in the world - the potato - fed on the human blood. The circle of life; nature, work and war... beautiful, grotesque and tragic at the same time.

Spud, the informal British word for potato, was also a slang term used to refer to a low ranking British soldiers in World War I.

The exhibition features portraits of military personnel, R.A.F. Aircraft men and women, factory workers and businessmen. Painterly colour images inspired by British Realism, as well as black and white shots, all are taken on location in England and France.

After reading the works of writer and poet Robert Graves who was himself a seriously wounded officer in WWI, Griffin began to think about the terrible wounds inflicted on soldiers during the conflict, which is also reflected in some of the still life images in the show.

The project has been dedicated to the First World War by Griffin and ultimately resulted in a book; *SPUD* published by GOST (March 2018). The exhibition at MMX Gallery in London will open on 25th October and will run until early December. 11th November this year equally marks the centenary of the end of World War I.



Brian Griffin (born in 1948 in Birmingham) is widely acknowledged as one of the most prominent British photographers of his generation, constantly working on new materials and still pushing boundaries of contemporary photography.

He is famous for his ground-breaking approach to portraiture from Iggy Pop to Kate Bush, and numerous high profile projects stretching from 'Work' in the 1980's to his project charting 'The Road to 2012', commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery. 'Work' went on to be awarded the Best Photography book in the World at the Barcelona Primavera Fotografica 1991 and The Life magazine used the photograph "A Broken Frame" on its front cover of a special supplement "The Greatest Photographs Of The 80's".

Throughout his career, over twenty monographs of Griffin's work have been published, his work has been the subject of over fifty international solo exhibitions and is held in institutional collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the Arts Council of Great Britain, London; the British Council, London; the National Portrait Gallery, London; the Museum Folkwang, Essen; the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; the Art Museum Reykjavík, Iceland; the Mast Foundation, Bologna; and the Museu da Imagem, Braga, Portugal.

In 2009, Brian Griffin became the patron of FORMAT Festival and in 2013 he received the Centenary Medal from the Royal Photographic Society in recognition of a lifetime achievement in photography.

LISTING INFORMATION:

Brian Griffin: SPUD!

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MMX GALLERY

448 New Cross Road, London SE14 6TY

www.mmxgallery.com

Opening Times:

Wednesday – Friday, 12 - 6pm

Saturday 12 - 5pm

Sunday: Closed

All other times by appointment

RELATED EVENTS:

Artist Talk: Brian Griffin in conversation with Zelda Cheatle

MMX Gallery, Saturday, 3 Nov, 2.30 pm, (booking via Eventbrite)

Film Night: *The Surreal Lives of Brian Griffin* by Michael Prince & a short film by Brian Griffin

Tuesday, 4th Dec (time TBC, more info and booking via Horse Hospital website)

Horse Hospital Arts Venue, Bloomsbury, London

PRESS INFORMATION

To request further information and images please contact Magdalena Shackleton: info@mmxgallery.com

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

All images © Brian Griffin, Courtesy of Brian Griffin & MMX Gallery

Test Potatoes, McCain, Béthune, France, 2017 (top of the first page),

Monsieur Marquez, Richebourg, France, 2017 (top left), *Wing Commander Toria, R.A.F., Benson, England, 2017* (top right),

One Eye, London, 2017 (right)

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Twitter | Facebook | Instagram @MMXgallery, @flatt22 (Brian Griffin)

