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GOB  
(catarrh among the living)

Joshua Stern

Opening Reception, Friday January 26, 6-8 pm  
Exhibition dates: January 27 to March 4, 2001  
Opening Hours, Friday to Sunday 1 to 7 pm

In the first one person exhibition to be organized at Parker's Box, we are very pleased to present new work by Joshua Stern, who also featured in our inaugural group show in June, 2000.

On first inspection, the representation of human heads, which are the subject of Stern's latest photographic works, seems to constitute some kind of interpretable set of Everyman caricatures. However, the dialogue which his work engages with the spectator, raises as many questions about the objective reality of what we're looking at, as it does about the subjective impressions each of us may have of one or other of his huge cast of characters.

Despite his technical mastery, Joshua Stern is not a photographer as such. His use of the medium is above all a means to an end, allowing the ambiguous representation of unseen models, made of hard to identify materials, transformed from an unknown scale. The uncertainty of what we're actually looking at is counterbalanced by its highly detailed definition, focussing intently on every bump, pimple and whisker protruding from these weird representations of our species.

It's tempting to wonder whether these faces were arbitrarily produced to serve the artist's needs, whether they are the harnessed outpourings of the artist's imagination, - or if that really is the cashier from Western Union, or that older lady at the fish shop ! But this level of apparent social satire, is only the user-friendly veneer of the work. It's certainly easy to find parallels with well known grotesque representations of the contemporary (and timeless) populace, such as those by Leonardo and Brueghel, Hogarth and Daumier, or even with the odd presence of Messerschmitt's bronze grimaces. However, while the artist might claim to be flattered by such parallels, this would only serve to hide his real theater of interest. That is the manipulation of materials and images through processes which allow him to take an object which is humble and derisory in all of its attributes (content, style, subject, size, scale, etc...) and then to inflate its presence through different means, (including the gallery context) in order to endow it with importance, as (the representation of) art, social commentary, matter, or, to use the artist's own words, as *Gob*, or *catarrh among the living* !

For further information please contact the gallery.