

*The Joy of Sex*

ANDY BENNETT

THE MEETING

Nov 9, 2024 – Jan 11, 2025

The Meeting is pleased to present *The Joy of Sex*, a solo exhibition by Andy Bennett, featuring a new body of work that takes the form of mirrors etched with drawings based on the eponymously titled 1972 publication.

Advertised as a sex manual, Alex Comfort's "The Joy of Sex" aimed to promote and normalize intimate knowledge, containing over a hundred illustrations based on photographs, strategically using drawing to mediate the representation of sex in order to avoid being categorized as pornography. This instructional approach allowed the publication to be widely accessible in bookstores. Bennett includes his grandparents' worn copy of "The Joy of Sex" in the exhibition, displayed on a coffee table in the center of The Meeting.

The mirror's etched white-lines nearly blend into the reflection of the gallery's white walls. Only when viewers stand before the works do the images become clear, at which point the viewer's reflection is overlaid with the copulating couple. This oscillation of imagery and reflection engenders a heightened self-awareness in the act of looking.

This experience recalls Jean-Paul Sartre's "Being and Nothingness," wherein he describes voyeuristically looking through a keyhole at a couple having sex. He enjoys peering without shame until he realizes he is being watched:

*When I am aware that someone else is watching me, I experience a transformation. I am no longer simply a being-in-the-world, freely exploring the environment; I am now a being-for-others. I feel myself pinned down by their gaze, transformed from subject to object, as though their perception of me has defined me.*

Andy Bennett (b. 1993, Port St. Lucie, FL) is a Los Angeles based artist. Bennett received his MFA from The University of California, Irvine in 2022 and BFA from ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California in 2015. His work has been included in select solo and group exhibitions at Stove Works (2024), Sara's (2023), Contemporary Arts Center in Irvine (2022), Phase Gallery (2022), California State University, Long Beach (2022). Bennett has been an artist in residence at Deep End Ranch (Santa Paula, CA) and a fellow at the Arts Research Cooperative (Los Angeles, CA). He founded the gallery Roger's Office in Highland Park, Los Angeles, which ran from 2017-2019, and currently co-runs the gallery Timeshare in Lincoln Heights, Los Angeles.