



Tom Bull
GHOST FOLK ECSTASY

Curated by Pilar Seivane
Opening Reception: Thursday, January 30th, 6 - 8 pm
January 31st - March 15th, 2025

Mucciaccia Gallery
21 Dering St., W1S 1AL, London, UK

Mucciaccia Gallery is delighted to present **GHOST FOLK ECSTASY**, debut London solo exhibition by artist **Tom Bull (b. 1995, Northamptonshire, UK)**, curated by Pilar Seivane. This exhibition presents a new body of sculptures, videos, and installations that explore the tension-filled landscapes of urban and rural life.

Drawing on a diverse range of influences—from folk traditions and Shaker design to minimalism, 90s aesthetics, and countercultures—**GHOST FOLK ECSTASY** unsettles their established associations, crafting a distinctive, eerie world: a nostalgic yet disorienting terrain, suffocated with layers of oozing black bitumen.

Bull employs a wide array of materials and techniques—spanning from architecture and model-making to craft, film, and ready-made objects—exploring the uneasy tensions between hedonism and austerity, escapism and reality, desire and violence, and tradition and rupture.

At the heart of **GHOST FOLK ECSTASY** is a collection of sculptural chairs that reinterpret the iconic forms of Shaker furniture. Celebrated as proto-minimalist design and cottagecore inspiration, Shaker furniture embodies the austere values of the eponymous Protestant sect. Bull's reimagining introduces a disruptive industrial element: discarded NOS canisters. Nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, often associated with rave culture, loitering, or "anti-social behaviour," starkly contrasts with the Shakers' disciplined spirituality. Though seemingly irreconcilable, both offer the promise of collective, ritualised, ecstatic experience, whether through religion, hedonistic release, or the numbing excess of substances.

The artist's reference to Shaker craftsmanship and minimalist design interrogates a melancholic yearning for order and simplicity in the midst of a convoluted present. Yet, he also incorporates *doesn't get any more **HARDCORE COTTAGECORE** than this (2022 - 2025)*—an active log burner—as well as a series of intervened Ford Escort car models, showing a fascination with frenzy, freedom, and, perhaps, upheaval. *GHOST FOLK ECSTASY (2025)*, a video installation, follows the raw exploration of life, identity and boundaries by a teenage boy in 1990s rural Switzerland. Brimming with a restless hunger for experience, these fragmented glimpses form an open-ended narrative—an infinite archive of authentic life, sourced from YouTube and recontextualised within Bull's dripping black birdcages.

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FUEL TO BURN (2025) continues with the same protagonist, taking us on a volatile journey through car countercultures, where teenage angst, self-discovery, and the performance of masculinity collide. The car—typically a symbol of freedom—becomes a vessel for disorientation. Aimless drives through rural landscapes echo the repetitive, destinationless motions of scrolling through digital content, reflecting the disjointed rhythms of modernity.

Bull's work draws out uncomfortable emotions, allowing them to emerge from the darkness. Through layers of black bitumen, he challenges notions of white male identities and nationalism, subtly hinting at their allure and how ideologies of supremacy, often lurking, may exploit latent, simmering violence, offering themselves as false remedies for feelings of loss and decline. For Bull, bitumen becomes more than a material—it is a tool for critique, darkening and interrogating what might otherwise seem innocuous or nostalgic.

This tension culminates in *MOSH PIT* (2025), a large-scale vinyl at the back of the exhibition that reads "SHAKE!". A nod to the Shakers, hedonistic dancing, and the use of laughing gas, the piece doubles as a rallying cry against the sedation of contemporary life. *GHOST FOLK ECSTASY* does not offer resolutions but instead intensifies the contradictions and anxieties of our time. Through his hauntingly charged sculptures, videos and installations, Tom Bull creates a space where viewers are invited to sit and grapple with the unresolved tensions of our present moment.

Tom Bull (b. 1995, Northamptonshire, UK) graduated with a BA Hons in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins, University of Arts London, UK (2018), and an MFA from Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK (2022). Bull has completed large-scale commissions for various institutions including Turf Projects, London, UK (2023); and Yetea Museum, Chilgok, Korea (2023). Solo exhibitions include E-Werk, Freiburg, GER (2023); and Airspace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (2019). Selected group exhibitions include Sherbet Green, London, UK (2024); Cob Gallery, London, UK (2024); Lungley, London, UK (2023); General Expenses, Mexico City, MEX (2023); and South London Gallery, London, UK (2022). Bull was the recipient of Elephant Trust Fund (2024); London Bronze Casting Fellowship (2023); New Contemporaries (2022); Gilbert Bayes Grant (2022); and Associate Studio Programme, ACME (2019).

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