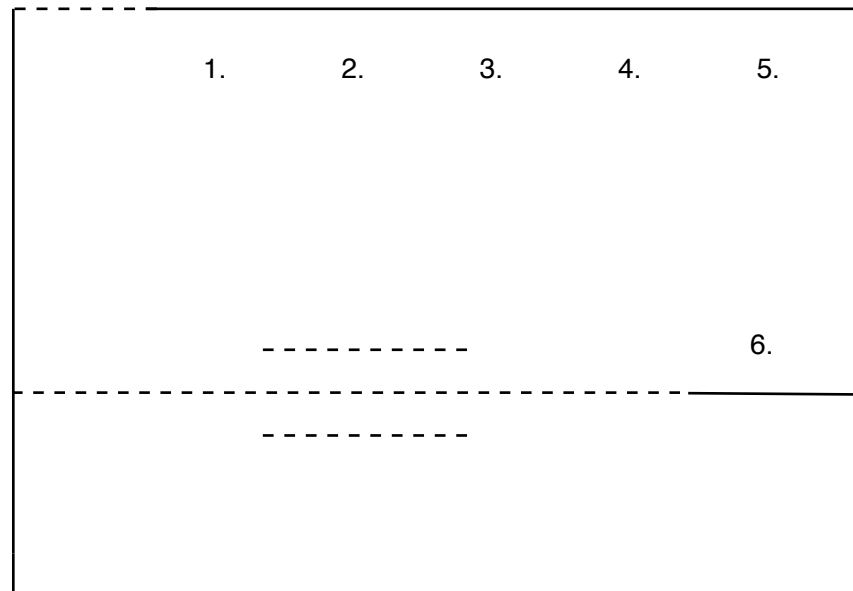


The John Lewis Nightmare
Timothy Lee Standring
17 May - June 17, 2025



1. The Lawyers, 2025
wood, ink, wallpaper, figurine
30 x 46 x 30 cm

2. Assets, 2025
wood, ink, figurines
71 x 43.5 x 20 cm

3. The Prenup II, 2025
wood, wallpaper
66 x 36 cm

4. Papers, 2025
wood, silver, enamel, ink, figurine
42 x 62 x 31 cm

5. Settlement, 2025
wood, ink, figurines
34 x 120 x 27.5 cm

6. Returned Calls, 2025
wood, wallpaper
90 x 30 x 21 cm

The John Lewis Nightmare

The title *The John Lewis Nightmare* is an allusion to the 2021 political scandal surrounding the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Carrie Johnson's refurbishment of their Downing Street flat, which cost over £120,000, well exceeding the £30,000 public allowance for renovations. Reports that Carrie dismissed the décor of previous Prime Minister Theresa May as a "John Lewis furniture nightmare" was framed as a rejection of a widely recognisable middle class aesthetic, and understood as indicative of Johnson's detachment from their core voter base. Not that Theresa May didn't also engage in some strange coded aesthetic choices, having famously worn a spicy pair of leather trousers that we were told cost £1000, presumably to work on similar dark realms of the public unconscious. But really who gives a shit about the design choices of ex-Prime Ministers, or if Carrie and the designer Lulu Lytle, whose company Soane Britain that carried out the renovation, had lost faith in John Lewis, which they both stated publicly that they definitely had not. What is disconcerting is that John Lewis has lost faith in John Lewis, and that this has paved the way for its recent pivot to Britain's seemingly only job, landlordism. The company, having shifted its attention away from the somehow no longer sustainable department store business to the construction of the Build To Rent flats business, is attempting to become one of the country's biggest private landlords. Which is the bigger nightmare. Or perhaps the flats are going to be really stunning.

For the exhibition at madame leniou, Timothy Lee Standring has clad the wall with a discarded shelving system from Appleton's, one of the largest sweet warehouses in London and located next to the artist's studio. Marked by sugar stains, graffiti and old commercial labels, the dark and coarse wood provides an ominous ground for a series of five small, wall-mounted sculptures. Wallpaper samples, discarded wrapping paper, and other found materials are added to the sculptural assemblages, around which different versions of porcelain and wire figurines of a drunken man clinging to a lamppost are unevenly distributed. Disorientated but romantic, these mass-produced figures are evidently struggling within the amalgams of domestic and commercial space.

Oliver Corino