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PRESS RELEASE

JAMES WILLIAM MURRAY
Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing

20 May – 4 July 2017

Stephane Simoens Contemporary Fine Art is pleased to present the first solo show by James William Murray in Belgium. *Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing* brings together works spanning photography, painting and sculpture produced over a two year period, brought together for the first time in exhibition. Stephane Simoens Contemporary Fine Art is pleased to present the first solo show by James William Murray (°1988) in Belgium. *Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing* brings together works spanning photography, painting and sculpture produced over a two year period, brought together for the first time in exhibition.

Murray's work, described by one critic as 'romantic minimalism', reveals an overarching concern with notions of desire bodies and the problem bound up with their representation. The diptych as both a formal and conceptual device is employed throughout the work, evoking ideas of coupling, doubling, and material intimacy.

The 2:1/2:1 aspect ratio of Murray's 'screen' works provides him with a scalable format for the exploration of materials and the structure of painting – its 'skin and bones' – whilst simultaneously functioning as abstract representations of two bodies, standing or lying side-by-side. This is made explicit by their titles, which situates the work within a wider context of mythology and amorous desire, bringing our focus back to the body.

Upon first impression *Untitled (Achilles & Patroclus I)* appears to comprise two metallic surfaces set slightly apart in an ash frame. However, closer inspection reveals a subtle, slightly reflective surface of polished graphite on birch panels that elicits the desire to touch.

Untitled (Laid) are two feather pillows covered with a delicate layer of copper leaf. Impressions in the centre of each suggest a recent presence. Two bodies. Over time the metal will develop a green verdigris – a second skin. They will become different objects.

Untitled (slowly, softly we are learning together) – a series of eight framed polaroids that the artist has obscured by covering the photographic surface with a single layer of silver leaf. Whom or what the images beneath depict remains undisclosed.

No, no, ain't nothing like the real thing, baby

James Murray (B.1988) lives and works in Brighton UK. Recent exhibitions include *Desire Works* (solo) Project78 Gallery St Leonards on Sea UK; *Old 16 / New 17* (group show) at Stephane Simoens Fine Art Knokke, Belgium; *Athens Photo Festival* at the Benaki Museum, Athens Greece; *NYC Art Book Fair-Daily Life Storage* (portfolio presentation) MOMA PS1, NYC USA; *Screened* (group show) Brighton Photo Fringe, Brighton UK; *East Sussex Open* at Towner Gallery Eastbourne UK