

PRESS RELEASE

Mitchell Moreno: BODY COPY

9 September - 15 October 2021



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Photofusion presents the first UK exhibition of **BODY COPY**, a photo-text series by Mitchell Moreno exploring the performance of masculinities through the discourse of online dating.

Over a period of two years, the artist searched and catalogued adverts found on apps and websites such as Grindr, Tinder, and Scruff, where men were looking to hook up with other men. Moreno chose 37 of these adverts to respond to photographically, attempting to create an 'ideal' version of what the poster was asking for.

Acting as stylist, set decorator, model, and photographer, each image was taken in the artist's flat through a solitary process using a hand-held shutter release and a camera on a tripod. Working on a shoe-string budget, they drew on their professional experience both in theatre and as a painter and decorator to create the various mise-en-scènes which their characters inhabit.

Moreno is in recovery from body dysmorphia and eating disorders, and the project originated as a way of addressing the crisis of being photographed and of seeing themselves.

Moving beyond the psychotherapeutic, **BODY COPY** considers how queer masculinities are highly codified constructions rooted in material and digital cultures. Sometimes these constructions playfully destabilise the cis-heteropatriarchy. Often, however, they reinforce it, betraying problematic attitudes towards class, race, gender and (dis)ability. This is particularly clear in a conceptual text piece in the exhibition, in which the artist lines the walls with a thousand hook-up adverts. Arranged alphabetically, the piece juxtaposes the unsettling, the banal and the humorous.

Kim Shaw, Director of Photofusion, said, “It’s particularly satisfying when you have the opportunity to exhibit work by an artist who you have supported throughout their career. Moreno came to Photofusion very early on, just a few months after they started working with photography. It was clear, even then, that they were making intelligent work about queer identity and representation. *BODY COPY* is a brave, beautiful, and sometimes harsh body of work. Its visual language is utterly unique— theatrical, performative and unflinching.”

Mitchell Moreno said, “I take offbeat scenarios and crude stereotypes and then try to invest them with accurate detail in order to create credible and resonant characters and spaces. This generates a playful tension, and I hope the series can raise questions about identity politics while at the same time be entertaining.”

Ru Paul said, “We’re all born naked/ And the rest is drag.”

24 colour photographs with text-titles are exhibited. Using a delimited colour palette and a rigorous approach to composition and lighting, Moreno’s images have a richness and precision reminiscent of historical portrait painting.

The exhibition is relevant to anyone with an interest in gender studies; digital culture; queer theory and LGBTQIA+ issues; portrait photography; tribes and subcultures; and semiotics.

Mitchell Moreno was born in Leicester, UK. After studying at Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music, they worked for over a decade in theatre, opera, and circus as a performer and director. Following a hiatus from work due to a mental health crisis, they began exploring photography - in which they are self-taught - in 2017.

Their work - which considers the performance of gender, art-as-therapy, and kinship from a queer working-class perspective - has been exhibited internationally. Their series *BODY COPY* has recently been shown at Ballarat International Foto Biennale (Australia), Copenhagen Photo Festival (Denmark), Singapore International Photography Festival (Singapore), Encontros da Imagem (Portugal), and Photo LA (USA).

Moreno supports themselves by working as a builder and decorator, and advocates for LGBTQIA+ and mental health issues.

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Notes for Editors

Press images (including crops pre-sized for social media) **can be downloaded [HERE](#)**
Please see below for terms of use.

For further information, additional images, or interview requests, please contact:

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Mitchell Moreno on +44 (0)7904 355095 or email contact@mitchellmoreno.com

Visitor Information

Exhibition open Monday - Saturday, 10.30am - 5.30pm

Entrance is Free.

Due to Covid-19 pre-booking may be necessary - please check on the website for the latest information before visiting.

www.photofusion.org

+44 (0)207 738 5774

Please note the gallery address is 6 Canterbury Crescent, however, the gallery entrance is via the First Floor of Brixton Recreation Centre, 27 Brixton Station Road, London SW9 8QQ.

About Photofusion

For 30 years, Photofusion has championed, supported and celebrated photography and photographers. Located in the heart of Brixton, we are one of the UK's largest and most comprehensive photographic resource centres. While we are well known for our darkrooms, gallery space, digital printing facilities, and education programme, what we are most proud of is the community of photographers and makers who have been a part of Photofusion over the years.

Accessibility

Step-free access is from International House, 6 Canterbury Crescent, London, SW9 7QD.

A guided tour by the artist for blind and visually impaired visitors can be scheduled during the show's run - please contact Photofusion for booking.

Quiet times, without other visitors, are available by appointment for those who need them - please contact Photofusion for booking.

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Image use

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