

ARTFORUM

Los Angeles

Nathaniel Mellors

THE BOX

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It's like watching television, but even more fucked up. There are many ways, of course, to fuck up a television show, but artist and musician Nathaniel Mellors, for his debut solo exhibition here, gives us the shape and cues of a British sitcom as warped by the absurdist tragicomedy of Samuel Beckett and the squelching oeuvre of Paul McCarthy. Mellors's video series "Ourhouse," 2010–16, for instance, features a chubby man known as The Object eating and excreting books whose contents corrupt the lives of a nuclear family with walk-on troglodytes and casual cannibalism.



Nathaniel Mellors, *The Sophisticated Neanderthal Interview*, 2012–13 HD video, color, sound, 24 minutes.

Spend an hour in this world and the barely suppressed grossness of modern existence feels like a crueler joke than a time-travelling toilet fueled by Neanderthal feces. Though often crooked, Mellors's jokes elicit authentic laughter. In a Pythonesque sequence of the video *Ourhouse Ep. 3: The Cure of Folly*, 2011, a laid-back fellow in a forest trades an amulet to an intense, barking John Cleese lookalike for fifteen "authentic" fingers of Christ plucked out of a Tupperware container that's held by a grinning, gap-toothed henchman with bloody bandages over his stumpy hands.

Displayed as large and small projections, on a ring of big-screen TVs, or in a small monitor that's coupled with a gnarled and jumpsuited hippie-ish effigy for *The Sophisticated Neanderthal Interview*, 2012–13, Mellors gives the audience about five hours of quasinarative—a lot to take in for a gallery show, but it feels apropos of a survey of the artist's recent output. Gnawed-on body parts made of latex and silicon; paintings embedded with human false teeth; and an animatronic disembodied head in a fountain of its own vomit round out this perverse tomfoolery to delightfully disturbing effect.

— Andrew Berardini

