

ARTFORUM

Los Angeles

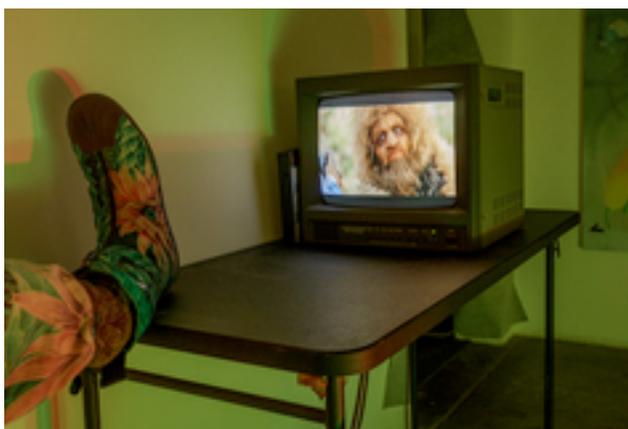
Nathaniel Mellors

THE BOX

805 Traction Avenue

February 27–April 9, 2016

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

