

**Joseph Davies**  
**PROSODIES INDULGENS**  
**Press Release**

GAO is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Joseph Davies, whose practice spans writing, performance, sculpture and sound.

In linguistics, prosody refers to the musicality of language, specifically the patterning of rhythm and syllable structure, 'towards song'. Davies describes how communication triggers pictures within us: *'when we absorb language we absorb a referential abstract, at once an image and a texture of sound.'*

On entering the space, the viewer encounters a number of Davies' recent attempts at transferring digitally printed images with decorators' caulk; an absorbent material that warps the graphic content of the images, slowing down the speed at which they are read. Legibility is further undone by splashes of colour or areas of intentional water damage, corroding the lettering into texture. Davies writes: *'The image's communication is mushed up and its structuring, as it is seen, is undone. One does not read the image so much as where the image is not, where it dissolves, fades, or turns into line. The image is absorbed and gives a face to the tumults of the caulk. The abstract is clarified and the clarified abstracted; something like thought, or melted ice cream, or vomit.'* The works are permeated by Davies' preoccupation with the formal constraints of language. His own system for grouping together words is based either on associated meaning, such as *'Witch/Masks'*, or the *'chewy'*, phonetic malleability of a sentence: *'Desperate Banana Girls Hell Is Real.'* In addition to the sombre, historical palette, his word techniques resonate with the experimental methodology of Dada and Kurt Schwitters, as well as updating the *découpé* systems of William Burroughs.

Joseph Davies  
*PROSODIES INDULGENS*  
 17 Nov - 20 Dec 2017

Opening reception:  
 7-9pm, Thu 16 Nov 2017

Joseph Davies (b. 1992, Brighton UK) lives and works in London. Graduated from Slade School of Fine Art (2016).

For any enquiries please contact the gallery at [info@gao.gallery](mailto:info@gao.gallery)



Joseph Davies, Trace Ad (witch masks) 2017, digital print transfer on caulk and mdf, 122 x 86cm.

# GAO

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Though Davies works intuitively, recontextualising images from his archive and allowing certain tropes to accrue, he is uninterested in the result simply being a shallow fetishism of materials. He wants something more conceptually loaded and indexical, employing language across a variety of formats. The front of the gallery is given over to a looped, multi-channel sound installation, voiced by a single narrator. The narrator uses her script as a conduit, changing pitch, tone and voice but always desperate to communicate some urgent anxiety, flipping between confident expression, repeating phrases with a speed redolent of advertising and mispronounced stumbling as if reading a prompt in a foreign tongue. Like much of Davies' writing, the piece is simultaneously lyrical, sonorous and coarse. The audio murmurs through the gallery in dialogue with the MDF prints, supplementing the visual with the linguistic and merging the many disparate fragments together as one.

With special thanks to Amelia Sparling (narrator).