

Press Release:

The first major retrospective of artist Frith Powell

The MuBild of Arte Normale

And The Singular Apprenticeship of Fabio Penitente



The Barn Gallery, Kendrew Quad, St John's College, St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3JP

29 October–16 November 2017 Open daily: 10am-6pm

Opening and Private View: Saturday October 28th 6 – 9 pm

For almost 50 years, artist Frith Powell has worked reclusively in his Oxford studio – wrestling with visual and philosophical themes with single-minded dedication. At last, he has been persuaded to show this substantial and remarkable culmination of a life's work, dedicated to dressing *'Nothing in Something...giving shape to entities that lie beyond the bounds of sense experience.'*

The four-room exhibition explores Frith Powell's extraordinary range and technical virtuosity. The main body of his work is from the conceptual and enigmatic *MuMu* collection, which includes beautiful and quietly challenging oil paintings, sculptures and drawings. The final gallery draws the viewer into the magical world of Frith Powell's alter ego. Entitled *The Singular Apprenticeship of Fabio Penitente*, this mysterious and enchanting 'hidden archive' of small sculptures and drawings comprises an entire and coherent 'alternative' culture, replete with its own meticulously sculpted artefacts.

'I feel the essential challenge for me, as an abstract painter, is in creating what could be called a 'fiction of reality', something that looks as though it might be real, at first sight, or is at least highly suggestive of reality, but on closer examination is seen to be unrecognizable. Other.' (Frith Powell on his *MuMu* collection)

IAN FRITH POWELL was born in Buckinghamshire in 1947 and studied Fine Art at Konstfack in Stockholm. He has travelled extensively, lived in Venice, and spent time with Bedouins, Aborigines and Batak Tribesmen. He exhibited in Scandinavia and Europe before returning to England in the 1970s, where he has avoided the limelight almost entirely for fifty years. This is his first major British show.