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Blackout

Miguel Martin

Opening Saturday, March 15th, 7 – 9pm

UPVC is pleased to present **Blackout**, an installation of digital works by artist Miguel Martin.

Transforming the porch of his Hastings home into a reflective space, Martin reimagines its windows with graphics reminiscent of convenience store façades, merging the layered aesthetics of English shopfronts with the contents of West Belfast corner shops he grew up around. Drawing upon the legacy of these spaces during The Troubles (a period of ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s to 1998), his work explores the intersection of memory, commerce, and place.

These shops were not just commercial spaces but essential lifelines for communities navigating curfews, blackouts, and street violence. During periods of heightened unrest, many stores were forced to close early, leaving families reliant on informal house-shops. The title **Blackout** references these enforced curfews, power cuts, and the visual obstruction of security shutters, symbols of both protection and imposed control.

Martin's familial ties to this history run deep, with his grandfather and great-grandfather operating corner shops in West Belfast throughout this turbulent era. **Blackout** not only pays homage to these resilient community spaces but also explores the complex interplay between public and private realms, commerce, and identity. By situating the installation within his own home, Martin invites viewers to reflect on how façades, both literal and metaphorical, shape our perceptions and experiences.

About the Artist

Miguel Martin (b. Belfast 1985) is a visual artist whose work engages with the aesthetics of liminal spaces, internet folklore, and mediated identity, reflecting on how perception is shaped in an era of digital and physical overlap. His practice encompasses drawing, installation, and text-based works, often drawing from personal archives and collaborative exchanges. His recent projects include *Between Two Worlds* at 5th Floor Gallery, East Sussex College, Hastings (2024), *REAL MAGIC* at Aspace Gallery, East Sussex College, Hastings (2023), *Let's Do an Art!* at The MAC, Belfast (2021) and *Fire in the Middle* at The Naughton Gallery, Queen's University, Belfast (2020) as well as offsite group and solo projects in Hastings, Germany, Russia, Hawaii and Istanbul.

www.miguelmartin.co.uk
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