

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Brendan Lott**

***I Have a Strong Urge to Do Something Harmful or Shocking***

**15 November 2025 – 10 January 2026**

**Opening Reception: Saturday, November 15, 5-7pm**

Walter Maciel Gallery is pleased to present *I Have a Strong Urge to Do Something Harmful or Shocking*, a new body of work by Brendan Lott. The exhibition interrogates AI image creation by using prompts from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), a long-standing diagnostic tool used to assess human personality traits and psychopathology. The AI generated images are then printed using the pre-electrical salt print process.

Originally developed in 1943 by Starke R. Hathaway and J. C. McKinley at the University of Minnesota, the MMPI comprises 567 statements that provoke emotional and psychological responses in human subjects. Lott uses test statements verbatim for the prompts in an AI Image generator, uncovering exaggerated visual interpretations of the emotionally charged language. The resulting images reveal an uncanny synthesis of data and emotion; fragments of human psychology filtered through machine learning. The figures are often nude in sexually provocative gestures that are recognizably unreal with too many limbs, extra fingers and painful body contortions.

In a striking counterbalance to the AI technology, the images are printed using the 19th-century salt print process, one of the earliest photographic printing methods. Each print begins with watercolor paper coated in salt water and silver nitrate, then contact printed with a full-size negative using only sunlight. This slow, deliberate process produces delicate tonal variations and a material warmth that contrasts with the cold precision of machine-generated imagery. The final works are placed in found frames and include engraved plaques with the statement used to generate the image, merging digital and analog histories into tangible relics of perception and interpretation.

By combining psychological testing, artificial intelligence and hand-crafted photographic techniques, Lott invites viewers to reflect on the boundaries between scientific observation and creative intuition. The exhibition suggests that even the most clinical instruments of understanding can yield psychologically disturbing and unpredictable insights when filtered through a coded program with signifiers from human language.

Brendan Lott is a Los Angeles-based artist whose practice bridges digital media, photography and conceptual art. He received his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and his MFA from Stanford University. Lott has exhibited work nationally and internationally, including *Art and Hope at the End of the Tunnel* curated by Edward Goldman at the USC Fisher Art Museum, *Memories I'll Never Have* at the San Jose Museum of Art, *To Illustrate and Multiply: An Open Book* at Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, *Reconciling America: Miraculous Encounters with the Mundane*, at the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, and group exhibitions at UC Riverside Sweeney Art Gallery and Musée d'Art Modern et Contemporain in Strasbourg, France. In 2016, Lott completed a major commission consisting of 17 multi-panel photographic works for the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Chicago. Other public acquisitions include the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, Morgan Stanley in New York and Pimco Corporation in Orange County.