

The background of the entire image is a repeating pattern of the word "ICON" in a blue, sans-serif font, arranged in a grid. The word "ICON" is repeated horizontally and vertically across the entire red background.

ICON

CANDIDA
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FINEART



ICON

Worthy of our 21st century attention?

10 SEPTEMBER –
22 OCTOBER 2016

Private view Friday

9th September 6–8pm

Thomas Allen, Stephen Chambers Ra, Eileen Cooper Ra,
Tracey Emin Ra, Nicole Farhi, Rebecca Fontaine Wolf,
Laura Ford, Nicola Green, Kirstina Hagstrom, Tom Hammick,
Jeremy Houghton, Lou Johns, Alice Kettle, Annie Kevans,
Liane Lang, Irene Lees, Enzo Marra, Jane Mcadam Freud,
Chitra Merchant, Andrew Millar, Grayson Perry Ra,
Marc Quinn, Dan Stevens

Worthy of our 21st century attention?

ICON—A person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration. (The Oxford Dictionary)

I'm told that if you ask an interesting question, you get an interesting answer. By asking this group of contemporary artists, "what is iconic to you or what is happening now that you think will be the iconography of tomorrow?" I have not been disappointed. The results are fascinating, not least because these artists are uniquely placed as our observers, commentating on our time, in our time. Such a direct question also means that the work each artist has created or selected is a personal response, with particular pertinence on a subject that matters to them. Politics, fame, love, romance, myths and the environment are largely represented in the form of activists, politicians, celebrities, campaigners and Earth itself. These pieces could therefore be amongst the most important, and potentially valuable pieces, of each of the artists' work.

I had asked this question pre-Brexit and, as I write, we await the outcome of the USA presidency candidacy. The 'will-he-won't-he' debate rolls on, Donald Trump could well become the next president of the free world—an undoubted icon (whether you like it or not) of our age. We seem to be in a time of much global uncertainty, some might think a veritable Pandora's Box, and without doubt the next few years are set for considerable change. Yet, if we take a step back from this baffling, noisy, fast-paced world and look hard we can see that there is perhaps a constancy in our human need to hold up and identify with an idea, thing or person that represents the best and sometimes the worst of ourselves and our times. It is these that will become the indelible images for our living moment - our icons. We cannot accurately predict what these will be, but we can be curious, dig deeper and expose the voices we hear most strongly or the quiet patterns emerging.

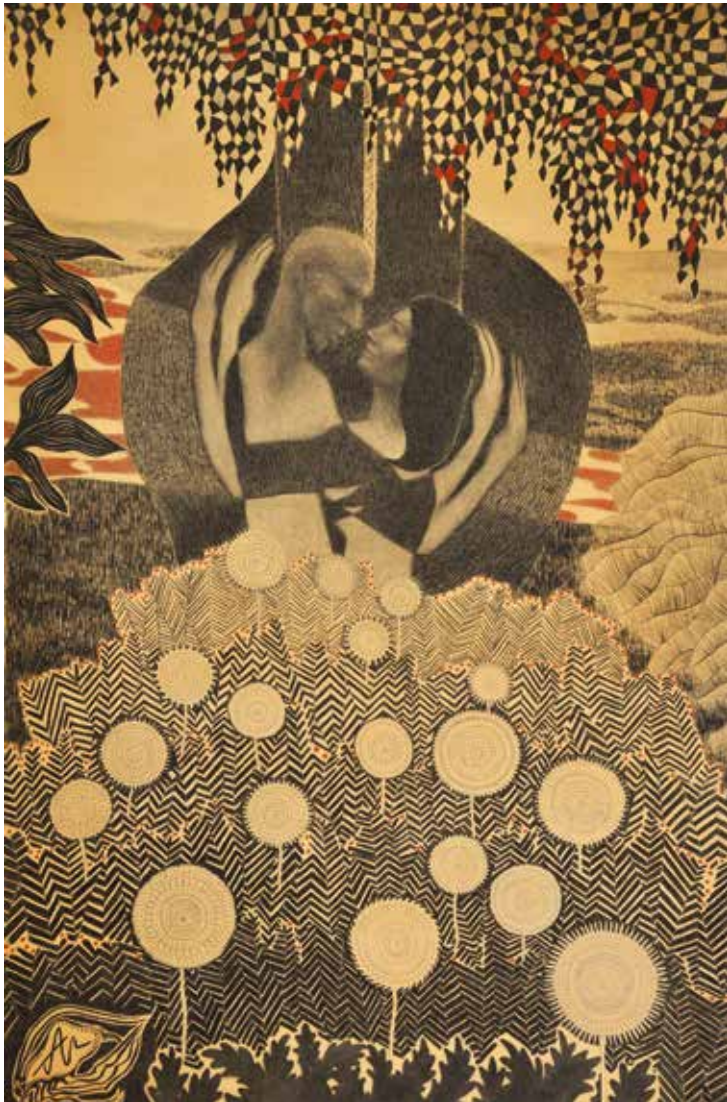
As the work for ICON has been coming in, I have been looking to see if there is a theme. There is certainly a sense of the human struggle, being up against it and overcoming adversity, but there is also love and reference to the planet; all revised for our 21st century concerns. Though, above all, I read hope. As the myth of Pandora's box demonstrates, Hope is perhaps the most important element of our human experience. I think many of the artists here have picked out their icons in this spirit. People, objects and ideas that can be seen to represent the best of our qualities as well as to remind us of the beauty in the simplicity of things and time passing.

ICON is a show that is powerful, opinionated and up for debate. As always, hearing the artists' voice is an important part of the exhibition and each has written a few lines about their piece and why, in their view, their choice is an icon of today. The five artists who have created new works have all featured in the gallery previously: Stephen Chambers RA, Eileen Cooper RA, Annie Kevans, Irene Lees and Jane MacAdam Freud. I thank them for contributing to the conversation with a new and hopefully soon to be iconic work.

The exhibition features 23 British figurative artists, who cast their gaze over our social, cultural, religious and political icons, through their 21st century looking glasses. Some are icons themselves and others are arguably creators of future iconic imagery. They cut through the bombardment of visuals, noise and information of our modern world and pick out the symbols, people and ideas that represent our thoughts, dominate our attention or are held up as worthy of our adulation.

"Art is an effort to create, beside the real world, a humane world." —Andre Maurois

Candida Stevens, Curator



Beautiful, Beautiful
By Thomas Allen
2014

150 × 100 cm
Charcoal, sanguine
and graphite
on paper

Just as religious icons were originally inspired by a sense of devotion to something held sacred, this image was created in the same spirit. My hand was moved by feelings of loving devotion. What is more sacred than Love, romantic or otherwise? Its beauty flows both outwardly and inwardly to illuminate our internal and external worlds. Beautiful to behold, beautiful to feel.

Arundhati Roy
(New piece for Icon)
By Stephen
Chambers RA
2016

52 × 43 cm
Oil on panel

I cast my eye to the extraordinary talents of Arundhati Roy. Writer, activist and intellect, with a striking visual presence, she has an immediacy and relevance that makes her my choice for ICON. Winner of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction, for her book *The God of Small Things* in 1997, she also demonstrates fierce dedication to championing the causes of environmentalism and human rights. A striking individual, strong-willed and highly intelligent, this image of Roy, painted from memory more than actual observation, boldly captures her impressive qualities. Rather than a portrait, it is an 'abbreviated reminder'.





The Moon
(New piece for Icon)
By Eileen Cooper RA
2016

107 × 81 cm
Oil on canvas

I puzzled for some time to identify a subject on which to focus. Contemporary references and people did not hold my attention, so I looked further back to the larger symbols of the world —Earth, Moon and Sun. Each a timeless presence and so often represented in our universal human storytelling and myths. For me the moon, and its particular affinity with woman-kind, held my gaze. I knew immediately that it would be personified as female. After that I immersed myself to paint it with great enjoyment and create a version of the moon in all its magnetism, intensity and continuous beauty.

Hide and Seek
By Sarka Darton
2015

Height 25 cm
Bronze

For me, this bronze sculpture is all about the playfulness of lingering childhood memories. The title, "Hide and Seek" is suggestive of both the innocence of the game hide and seek and the sinister nature of being 'lost' or of the uneasy darkness associated with forests and trees. By making the components of the sculpture disconnect, they invite the viewer to interact with them, imposing their own thoughts onto the meaning of the piece; therefore altering the perspective of the pieces story. I was always fascinated with art that evokes curiosity. I have long been captivated by a painting by Pavel Chelichev called Hide and Seek which inspires my own piece. The contradictions of playfulness and the sinister are present in both artworks. In this bronze the surface variation of the smooth faces contrasted against the rough tree suggest a dichotomy that will keep you looking and keep you guessing.



The Kiss
by Tracey Emin RA
2011

34 x 31 cm
Polymer gravure
etching



What could be more iconic than the future King and Queen on their wedding day. “It was the moment everyone was waiting for, because you want to know that it’s real. After that kiss, you realise it isn’t just splendour and pomp: it is two people in love. I’m talking about the second kiss, of course. The first one was so quick I almost missed it. The second kiss definitely looked like a snog; a proper kiss. They looked really naive and natural, like a child’s fantasy of a bride and groom. This was an incredible day of pageantry and, above all, Britishness.”

Anna Wintour
by Nicole Farhi
2012

30 cm high
Edition 2/9
Bronze White Patina



It is very rare that a person is recognised everywhere in the world not only for what they do but also for the way they look. But this is the case with Anna Wintour. She is best known as the dazzling editor-in-chief of Vogue magazine. But she is recognised everywhere for her iconic pageboy haircut and large sunglasses. We met and became friends decades ago while I was a Fashion Designer and she has been a champion of my new life as a sculptor. She's one of the most loyal and generous people I know, and she was happy to sit 3 years ago for the bust I made of her.



Eternal Recurrence
by Rebecca
Fontaine-Wolf
2015

183 × 153 cm
Oil, acrylic, ink and
pastel on linen

The image of the mother and child has been part of human consciousness throughout the ages and across cultures. This painting is a take on this timeless motif using contemporary subjects. The piece explores the immense sense of meaning and purpose which motherhood can provide, along with a complete surrendering of the self to the needs of the child. At the same time this portrays how a mother's unfulfilled desires for herself and for her own life can become transferred on to her child, who in turn is now the one who must face the future and carry the burden of fulfilling her desires. Now she too has become part of the cycle.

Judgement
Day Cat 2
by Laura Ford
2015

Bronze
225 × 290 cm
Edition 1/5

This sculpture is one of a group of 7 sculptures called Days of Judgement. His friends in the group evoke, through posture and dress, the atmosphere of workers experiencing the kind of existential crisis provoked during market crashes in any sector of the economy. The feeling is of high anxiety and internal conflict. This self dramatising Cat might ply his trade as a self conscious beatnik poet, a curator of art or perhaps even an artist? Whatever their trades may be these Cats attempt to evoke the kind of inner struggle experienced by individuals in critical situations –the CEO of Lehman Brothers, Nicholas Serota justifying the extension of the Tate, JFK struggling over Cuban missiles or possibly, in this instance, the artist asking if he can carry on in the face of the world.





Obama, Sacrifice
(New piece for Icon)
by Nicola Green
2016

133 × 101 cm
Unique
3 colour
silk-screen print

This artwork is the eighth and the last one of the series, *In Seven Days* by Nicola Green. It comes just as President Obama is coming to the end of his second term. It represents the sacrifice and personal toll of his presidency as well as being a reflection of the complex nature of the hope that was and still is projected onto him. The multiple impressions in the work of President Obama echo the different ways in which the press have represented him with lighter or darker skin colour at various points of his presidential career. The artist questions how these representations reflect the mood of the press and public and their responses to the question of identity and race in relation to the first African-American President of the USA.

White Essence
(New piece for Icon)
by Kristina Hagstrom
2016

40 × 30 × 30 cm
Unique
White alabaster

My Icon; The “White Essence” is a tribute to my essential will. It gives me the determination to persist with whatever thread I am following and not let myself get distracted. This determination manifests in different ways.

“The commitment to the inquiry—the determination not to give up or let yourself be distracted—is also a commitment to the quality of your experience. It is not a commitment to an ideal of being a good person. It’s a commitment to experiencing yourself and reality in the here and now regardless of whether you like what’s here or not”

A.H Almaas

“The White essence” represents how I feel working with stone and why I love working with stone. It connects me with a quality we all can experience when we feel rooted and deeply supported. This “Essence” gives me the capacity to feel at ease, supported, and in touch with my being in the midst of my daily life. I feel centred in myself, and I am neither distracted by my thoughts and emotions, nor by the external world.





Riding West 11
(New piece for Icon)
by Tom Hammick
2016

87 × 61 cm
Oil on canvas

Cowboys are an anachronism in this day and age. So why do I paint them regularly? Why are they such iconic subject matter for me? There is a strong need for me to have a metaphorical component to my work. I sift through potential images and motifs that I have gathered up from a variety of sources. Lone Cowboys reoccur a lot!

Specifically this painting has something to do with the following; To be an artist I am a loner. Always drifting off in mind and body. Impossible to live with. Being an outdoorsy sort of man, never more content than sleeping out under the stars, a cowboy has always been my alter ego since I was a child. Romantically (leaving out the horrors of the Native American Pogrom) I have always seen Cowboys as deeply flawed human beings like myself and sad pioneers, and Westerns have all the ingredients of modern day Sci fi. Both genres often explore the literary ideas of solitude, self discovery, a world in crisis, the quest. Ideas about a sense of belonging, where we live, whether it is even possible to have a home. Love and loss, riding out as things get tough. These are re-occurring themes in my work.

To read Tom Hammick's full statement visit Tom's page on our website.

The Queen's Head
by Jeremy Houghton
2016

30 × 40 cm
Watercolour



I had to shadow The Queen and Her Gentlemen at Arms for their Quincentenary year of 2009. I became adept at finding nooks and crannies down numerous corridors of power, where I could feast my gaze on a hidden world, and sketch behind closed doors. As the Monarch she has been painted on many occasion, however, her Elizabeth Windsor persona is even more guarded. In my sketches of her, this is the characteristic I searched for.



*Three Graces
Grandes*
(New piece for Icon)
by Lou Johns
2016

Height 252 cm
Unique
Built-up bronze
verdigris resin
on aged oak plinth

'Three Graces Grandes' represents to me what I have continually striven to show in my work: lean, pared-back, beauty, strength, fragility, interaction while representing here the female figures—charm, poise and ease—daughters of Zeus, King of the Gods. Having had three daughters myself, it amuses me to work with the strengths (and fragility) of the female and how the roles and parts chosen by girls and women in life differ from those of males. To enjoy and celebrate that difference enriches our everyday lives. These girls are interacting, moving, feeling the power within themselves and their bodies and between each other—not too unlike three modern-day girls going out clubbing. They are testing their power over their male counterparts and enjoying their sexuality within the safety of their girl threesome. There is energy in their interaction, in their statement and between their bodies: the three pieces of the whole. Raphael in 1504 portrays them with a ball each—a plaything, balance, movement—an element of game, of team. I want those who look at this piece to smile, to enjoy and to celebrate with me the youth and the strength of the human form.

Ruko
by Alice Kettle
2011

230 × 120 cm
Thread on linen

My icon is a devotional image of a lady. She is fragile and reflective. She is made as a symbol of hope emerging from the cloth as though part of it. Her name is Ruko, which is a Japanese flower name. Ruko stands in a field of scattered flowers, which appear like cupped hands as though they are gestures of contemplation and prayer. This piece represents hope as though in her stillness she symbolises a flowering and hopefulness. Ruko is a flower-woman emerging from the cloth as though growing from the land. She is named to acknowledge the devastation of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan in 2011. This catastrophic event affected hundreds of thousands of people many of whom lost their lives. Whilst Ruko signifies this particular moment she also suggests, as icons always do, a universal sense of hope. When I am making work, it has this sense of renewal, of making and of remaking.





*Linor Abargil, Miss
World, Feminist Icon*
(New piece for Icon)
by Annie Kevans
2016

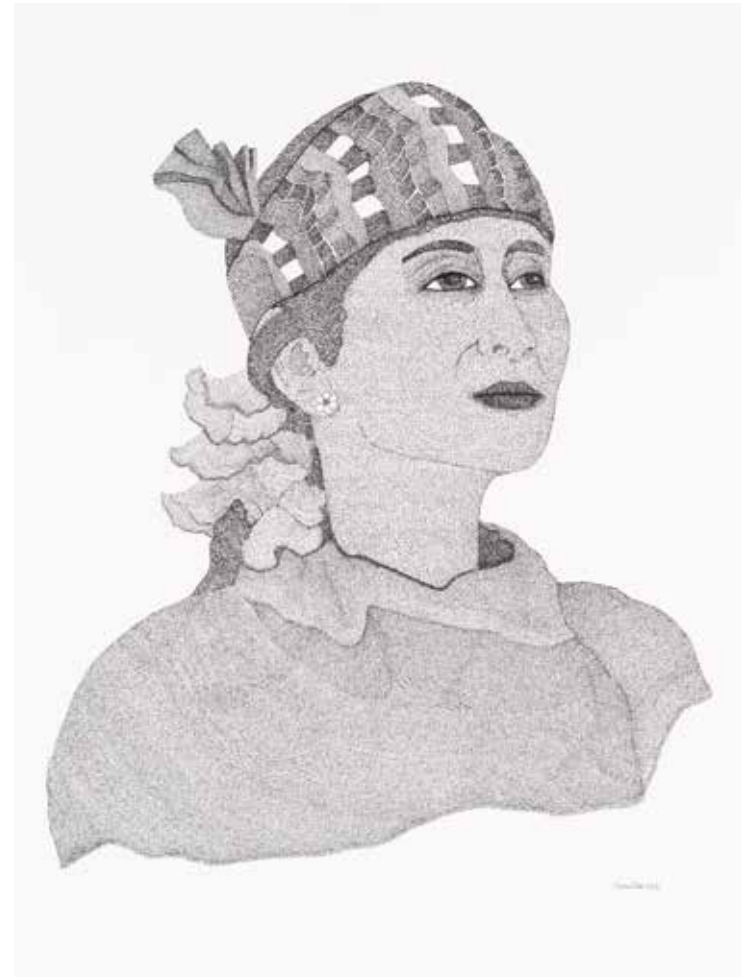
40 × 30 cm
Oil on paper

A portrait of Linor Abargil—former Miss World winner from Israel. She was raped a few weeks before winning the title in 1998, subsequently she became and remains a global campaigner against sexual violence. Now retrained as a lawyer, she is deeply religious and is only seen in headscarves and long clothes. A documentary about her was made called 'Brave Miss World' (by a team of women), which won numerous awards around the world. I think Linor Abargil makes a fascinating subject because of her transformation from beauty queen icon to feminist icon, from model to activist, from bikinis to headscarves.

Aung San Suu Kyi
by Irene Lees
2011

230 × 120 cm
Thread on linen

I took inspiration from fellow septuagenarian, Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Dignified, dedicated and devoted to non-violent resistance against the military Junta, she endured over 15 years of house arrest in her own country, in Myanmar. This drawing evokes a visual art-essay about the stoic, brave and ever-courteous character of this gracious and brilliant woman. She is a most humble and very relevant 21st century icon.





Ai Wei Wei
by Enzo Marra
2015

10 x 10 cm
Oil on panel

I executed this image based on Ai Wei Wei from a found photographic image. I painted him very simply, without detail to suggest his presence rather than his physical state of being, making for a far more personal interpretation of Ai Wei Wei.

I feel that Ai Wei Wei is an increasingly relevant artist, as he manages to include political and purely visual elements into his exhibited works. Living under such an oppressive regime yet still being willing to be true to himself in his oeuvre, is a strong example of the necessary role of the artist in today's world.

Crush (The Kiss)
(New piece for Icon)
by Jane McAdam
Freud
2015-16

130 × 174 × 92cm
Galvanised steel
wire, found objects



'I was filled with awe when I began my residency at Harrow School, and a sort of longing, which often precedes a productive period. CRUSH describes the process of crimping and crushing the material to make the work and also is an instruction to have a 'muse' which is a wonderful driving force.'

A romantic response to the idea of human longing represented by a kiss. A symbol often expressed in Art History, think Rodin and Klimt, here McAdam Freud re-ignites this intimate moment to reveal the capacity found within us all—to love.



*What do you do
in yours? Burqa 1*
by Chitra Merchant
2003

38 × 112 cm
Silkscreen print

Growing up in India I became interested in the Burqa, its perception in the world and what it means to be a woman wearing one. My interest increased as my muslim friends would tell me stories about life in the Burqa, both covert and overt. Gradually for me this garment took on a deeper resonance and I became interested in exploring this further through my drawing and printmaking practice. This resulted in a series of images that take a warm hearted look at the Burqa as a metaphor for what we choose to conceal or reveal to the world. Hence the question, 'What do you do in yours?'

Beginning
(New piece for Icon)
by Andrew Millar
2016

11 × 9 cm
Gold leaf polaroid

Anna May Wong (1905-1961) was the first Chinese American movie star, and the first Asian American actress to gain international recognition. She symbolises an age where boundaries were being overcome. Now we seem to be in a time where boundaries are being put back up.

I have been captivated by the striking images of movie stars for many years. They have such strong faces that imprint on your mind. By contrast it seems now that everyone looks so similar, as if there has been some sort of loss of individuality. This piece is a celebration of strength, individuality and the breaking down of barriers.





The Ashford Jihab
by Grayson Perry
2014

167 × 87 cm
Printed silk
Limited Edition

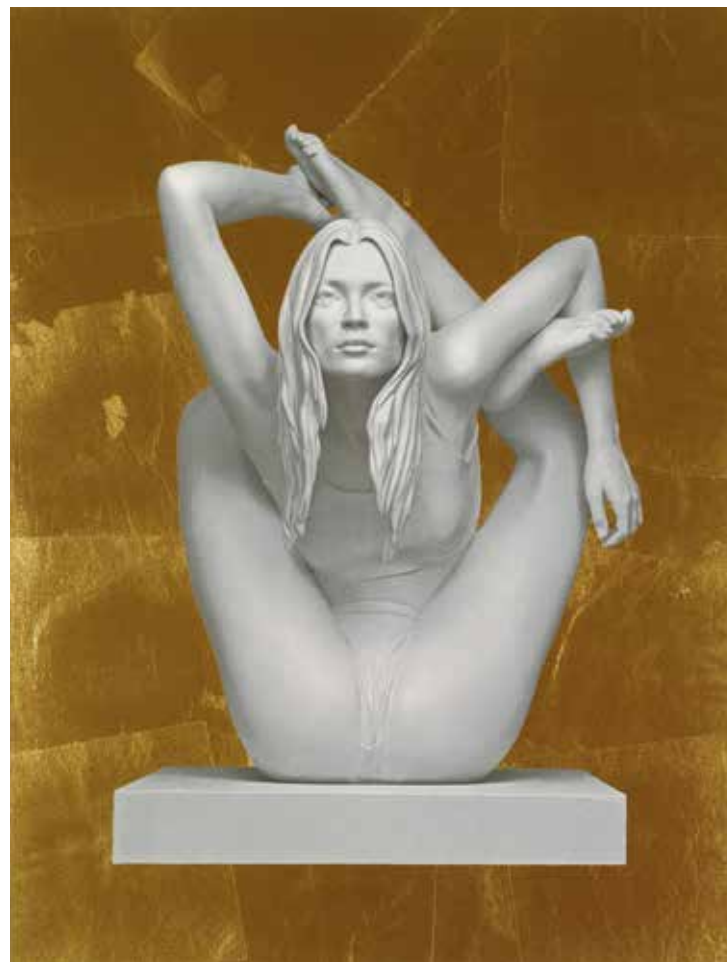
This scarf is one of the actual works from an exhibition entitled *Who are You?* at the National Portrait gallery. Each of the works in the show is an image about the nature of identity, a snapshot taken from the narrative of someone's life. Our sense of ourselves feels constant but our identity is an ongoing performance changed and adapted by our experiences and circumstances. We feel like we are the same person we were years before but we are not.

The scarf depicts Kayleigh Khosravi and her four children who live in Ashford, Kent. perhaps surprisingly to some, Kayleigh represents the most likely group to convert to Islam in the UK. What does Islam offer to a young white woman in her twenties? The answer, I found, appears to be a refuge from the nagging consumer pressures and constant, often sexual, scrutiny of women all pervasive in western society. Conversion also offers a strong and supportive sisterhood within the congregation of the mosque. I have portrayed Kayleigh and her children on the symbolic path from the temple of consumerism that is the Ashford Designer Outlet Centre to the focal point of the Muslim faith at the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

Sphinx (gold leaf)
by Marc Quinn
2012

70 × 55 cm
12 colour hand pulled
silkscreen print
Edition of 150

Quinn's two intricately detailed silkscreen prints of his 1996 iconic sculpture of supermodel Kate Moss depicts her unearthly beauty, but shows her limbs contorted in an extreme yoga pose, a reflection on the distortions of global media. Taking a three-dimensional image of the sculpture, and working directly with the artist, the print is hand finished in a choice of gold and silver leaf. 12 colours including a silk-screen glaze were used to produce the screenprinted image of the Sphinx.' This is not a portrait of a person, it's a portrait of an image twisted by our collective desires'





Vivienne Westwood
by Dan Stevens
1997

17.5 × 12.5 cm
Silver Gelatin print

For me Vivienne Westwood has become an icon of British creativity and to an extent multiculturalism. I grew up in the melting pot that was Bristol during the vibrant late 70s music scene. Torn between and spanning distinct cultures, fashion was homemade rather than purchased. I then spent the best part of 20 years working as a photographer in the glossy fashion world, and here she was, Vivienne Westwood whose roots were in punk and rebellion, originality and expression and noble causes.

When I met Vivienne Westwood she created a connection, a connection with this glossy world of high fashion, seemingly so far from 1970s Bristol and yet she spanned the gap, something that the British creative scene excels at. Vivienne Westwood is an example of harmony, despite potential for discord. She is a strong force for cross class unity and equality.

Design by Praline
Curator Candida Stevens
Furniture design by Ted Jefferis
Photography by Dan Stevens
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