

21ST CENTURY WOMEN

CURATED BY FRU THOLSTRUP & JANE NEAL
4 OCTOBER - 3 NOVEMBER 2018



This October, Fru Tholstrup and Jane Neal present *21st Century Women*, an iconic new group exhibition of British female artists, at Unit London's new Mayfair gallery. *21st Century Women* celebrates the centenary of women receiving the right to vote* and comprises a survey of emerging and established British female talent working across a wide range of disciplines.

These include:

Helen Beard
Anna Freeman Bentley
Zoe Buckman
Charlotte Colbert
Laura Ford

Eloise Fornieles
Maggi Hambling
Chantal Joffe
Kate MccGwire
Polly Morgan

Annie Morris
Suzy Murphy
Ishbel Myerscough
Vicken Parsons

Jenny Saville
Sue Webster
Victoria Wright
Michaela Yearwood-Dan

Launching in tandem with Frieze art week, the show includes British artists who examine the role of women in contemporary society; others who are motivated by the body politics surrounding the objectification of the female form; and those who question the fractured sense of being that many contemporary women feel today. Some of the artists included have chosen work that is not intended to be read and interpreted through the lens of their sex. This is a show about the freedom of women to make the art that they choose.

New research from the Freelands Foundation has shown that although 66% of postgraduate arts students in 2017 were female, just under a third of artists represented by London's major galleries were women. In 2017, just 22% of solo shows presented by major London non-commercial galleries were by women artists. Shockingly, this figure has decreased since 2016, which shows why it is more important than ever to champion female artists.

The exhibition is taking place at Unit London, a vibrant new gallery in the heart of Mayfair that was co-founded by two young entrepreneurs: Joe Kennedy and Jonny Burt. The exciting new space at 3 Hanover Square encompasses 6,000 sq ft over two expansive exhibition floors. With nearly 250,000 Instagram followers and one of the biggest engagement rates across any art platform, they have become a powerful art-world influencer, garnering over 3 million weekly impressions across the globe.



* At the end of the First World War, in 1918, the Representation of the People Act gave women over 30 - who were also householders - the vote. This was not extended to all women over the age of 21 until 1928.

NOTES TO EDITORS

FRU THOLSTRUP

"Unit's team are young and forward-thinking in their attitudes to women as well as to the art world. They have embraced the opportunity to host an exhibition of all female artists, curated by two women, as a means to highlight the imbalance within the art world."

Fru Tholstrup is a London-based art consultant with deep knowledge of the contemporary global fine art market, advising collectors and international businesses on building museum-quality art collections. Tholstrup is best known for her role launching Sotheby's flagship London Art Gallery, SI2 in 2013 and working closely with the SI2 Brand in New York and Hong Kong. Tholstrup's trademark creative approach ensures engaging and original exhibitions.

JANE NEAL

"Though significantly more women than men enter art school in Britain, only a fraction of these women continue to actively practice as artists beyond the age of 30. Nonetheless, a growing number of this minority of female artists are responsible for breaking new ground and contributing to the pioneering movements of today. It is high time that women artists attained greater visibility in the art world - and there is no excuse for discrepancy in price points between men and women in the primary or in the secondary markets. 21st Century Women is making a stand."

Jane Neal is a leading international curator and advisor working with both institutions and commercial galleries. Neal made her reputation as an expert on the contemporary art scene in Eastern Europe. Through curating the seminal exhibition 'Cluj Connection' for Haunch of Venison Gallery in 2006, Neal brought a whole generation of young artists from Romania to world attention. She is currently collaborating on interdisciplinary projects with world-leading figures in culture, design and architecture and working with private clients to build eminent collections.



Jonny Burt, Jane Neal, Fru Tholstrup and Joe Kennedy (from left to right).

UNIT LONDON

Unit London remains firmly committed to its core principles that art should be celebrated, inclusive and undivided. Founded in 2013, Unit London was born from an innate desire to break down the barriers of elitism and create new innovative pathways into the contemporary art world, recognised for its pioneering approach to digital media and role in expanding and diversifying audiences using new technologies.

Since its inception, Unit London has strived to provide a unique and experimental platform for the world's most distinctive emerging talent, showcasing their work to a culturally curious audience across the globe.

THE ARTISTS

Helen Beard uses a vivid rainbow palette to create interlocking arrangements of bright primary colour, which combine to describe explicit sexual encounters. Working from found images, Beard's work explores themes relating to gender, sexual psychology and eroticism.

Zoe Buckman, originally from Hackney and now based in New York, is a multi-disciplinary artist working in sculpture, installation, and photography, exploring themes of feminism, mortality, and equality.

Charlotte Colbert is a Franco-British artist and filmmaker. Language, psychoanalysis, socio-political constructions of gender and identity are at the heart of her practice, explored through anthropomorphic screen sculptures are an innovative mixed media format.

Laura Ford creates sculptures that are suggestive of both animals and mythological beasts. She combines soft fabrics, found objects and bronze to breathe life into these anthropomorphic creations. Though sweet, they elide sentimentality through the artist's decision to situate them in contentious or even menacing contexts.

Eloise Fornieles is a predominantly performance-based artist, who uses video, photography and spoken word to readdress the way in which live performative acts are documented and received by secondary audiences.

Anna Freeman Bentley explores discreet interiors to create emotive, psychological and semiotic readings of particular spaces. Freeman Bentley works with an intense, dark palette which she employs in a painterly manner, combining intricate brushwork with loosely fluid forms to heighten the tension of her chosen contexts.

Maggi Hambling CBE is a British painter and sculptor. Her distinctively vigorous style and commitment to portraiture over decades when it was often deemed unfashionable, have marked her out as one of the most recognisable, pioneering and controversial figures in British art. Hambling was recently selected to create the long-awaited statue commemorating the "foremother of feminism" Mary Wollstonecraft.

Chantal Joffe's figurative paintings explore psychological and emotional themes with seemingly casual brushstrokes, almost always depicting women or girls in groups or portraits, distorting scale and form to make a subject seem more real.

Kate MccGwire is an internationally renowned sculptor hailing from Norfolk whose practice probes the beauty inherent in duality, employing natural materials, often feathers, to explore the play of opposites at an aesthetic, intellectual and visceral level.

Polly Morgan's taxidermy sculptural work plays with and dismantles taxidermy traditions, creating sculptures that have brought her work to the attention of many notable collectors and curators both in Britain and internationally.

Annie Morris draws inspiration from her own life experience, and works across the disciplines of painting, drawing and sculpture. She is best known for combining obsessive drawing pieces with ready-made sculptures and her colourful stack columns have captured the imagination of viewers across the world.

Suzy Murphy's diarised sketches and paintings speak of her time in North America and reflect the area's sprawling townships and monumental landscapes. Composition, structure and the application of paint are all things that are innately part of her process almost to the level of subconscious.

Ishbel Myerscough is interested in the physicality of human imperfections - the aspects of oneself that society has encouraged us to edit out of our body images. Her work, very often, constitutes a sort of journey to the surface of the human being and everything she finds there she records.

Vicken Parsons creates small-scale oil paintings depicting delicate, warm spaces through spare shapes and neutral shades. Parsons applies thin, almost translucent layers of oil paint into imprecise geometric fields that evoke landscapes or partial views of interiors formed from memory and imagination.

Jenny Saville is known for her gargantuan paintings of sensual, fleshy women, transgender people and her depictions of the impact of plastic surgery on the female body. Emerging with the YBA's she quickly moved to the forefront of the international art scene as one of the most successful painters working today. Now firmly situated within the established context of historical figurative painting, Saville has seen her work compared with Rubens, Velasquez, Bacon and Freud.

Sue Webster, known for her collaborative work as an art duo with Tim Noble, works with shadow and light to visually challenge the relationship between the spectacular, the serious, and the entertaining and to explore concepts of perceptual psychology through transformative art.

Victoria Wright takes inspiration from social and political discourse, as well as philosophical writing. Wright's mark-making techniques suggest both portrait and landscape space, which take their starting point in exploring aspects of power, corruption and propaganda.

Michaela Yearwood-Dan's works tend to explore the themes of class, culture/race, gender and nature, all whilst remaining playful and vibrant. Working predominately with paint and collage, her art is richly sumptuous in its references to both the origins of traditional Fine Art and pop culture.

**Exhibition
VIP & Press View**

21st Century Women
Wednesday, 3 October 2018

**Dates
Private View**

4 October - 3 November 2018
Friday, 5 October 2018

For all press enquiries and future partnership opportunities please contact:
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