

Guler Ates / Helen Barff / Sutapa Biswas / Sonia Boyce  
Jemima Burrill / Helen Chadwick / Sarah Duffy / Rose  
English / Rose Finn-Kelcey / Alison Gill / Helena Goldwater  
Joy Gregory / Margaret Harrison / Alexis Hunter / Frances  
Kearney / EJ Major / Eleanor Moreton / Hayley Newman  
Freddie Robins / Monica Ross / Jo Spence / Jessica  
Voorsanger / Alice May Williams / Carey Young



EJ Major, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, Contact  
Sheet 1, 2009 (detail)

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The firm provides business and personal legal advice to a wide range of clients both in the UK and internationally. Collyer Bristow has been championing emerging talent in contemporary art for nearly twenty years.

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Viewing is by appointment, Monday to Friday, during office hours  
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## An Exhibition Guide

AN EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY ART REFLECTING ON 40 YEARS SINCE THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT

# LIBERTIES

2015 marks 40 years since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act in the UK, a law that aimed to change the landscape of our society. Curators Day+Gluckman have been exploring these themes for their project *A Woman's Place* which questions and addresses the contemporary position of women in our creative, historical and cultural landscape through contemporary art.

Works by over 20 women artists reflect the changes in art practice, within the context of sexual and gender equality, since the introduction of the Act. Some artists confront issues that galvanised the change in law whilst others carved their own place in a complex and male dominated art world. The exhibition presents a snapshot of the evolving conversations that continue to contribute to the mapping of a woman's place in British society. Body, femininity, sex, motherhood, economic and political status are explored through film, photography, sculpture, performance and painting.

Rose Finn-Kelcey is revered as an iconic, innovative feminist artist. Much of her work was ephemeral but some of her photographs and other works have been collected internationally, including by the Tate. The title of her work, 'The Restless Image - A Discrepancy Between the Felt Position and the Seen Position', is self-explanatory and characteristic of the ambivalent nature of art practice. The confident handstand (inspired by an old photograph of her mother as a young woman) belies the possibility that the potential for collapse remains ever present.

### Rose FINN KELCEY (1945–2014)

Rose English has been writing, directing and performing her own work internationally for over 40 years. Her productions feature a diversity of co-performers including musicians, dancers, circus performers, magicians and horses. These collages from 1973 are amongst her earliest works. They represent her already consolidated interest in identifying, dismantling and reshaping oppressive, predominantly patriarchal, cultural systems. Like many other women artists in the 1970s and 80s she saw performance and its documentation as a new tool for critical activity.

### Rose ENGLISH

**A performance by Duffy will take place on the 24th September.**

Helen Chadwick's highly influential work is synonymous with the feminist art and continues to provoke and inspire subsequent generations of artists and audiences alike. 'Wreaths to Pleasure' (1992–94), a 13 piece series referred to by Chadwick as 'Bad Blooms', shows arrangements of vividly coloured flowers floating on the surface of domestic fluids. The series premiered in April 1995 at her solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

### Helen CHADWICK (1953–1996)



Helen Chadwick, *Wreath to Pleasure No 8, 1992–1993*, Copyright The Estate of Helen Chadwick. Courtesy Richard Saltoun Gallery

Recent graduate Sarah Duffy spent a year researching the practice of belly speaking in relation to historical female figures. The practice, now more commonly known as ventriloquism, goes back to ancient historical times and appears throughout various religious texts. It was women who were associated with this ability, often believed to have been possessed or penetrated by male gods and demons, enabling them to speak without moving their lips. Duffy

### Sarah DUFFY

Jemima Burrill's practice explores creativity within domestic and societal constraints with both humour and darkness. Through drawings and etchings she explores the characterisation of women in myths and storytelling and is an astute commentator on motherhood. The 'New Model', a film made in 2014, sees the artist dressed as a housewife, pass through a car wash, later scrubbed, dried and reinvented as a younger woman.

### Jemima BURRILL

*World's Futures.*

Sonia Boyce's 'Devotional Wallpaper' is part of a larger project and body of work called 'The Devotional Collection'. Boyce investigated the act of archiving as a very personalised and subjective act of memory. The wallpaper has the names of 200 black British women in the music industry (see essay). Boyce's multi-disciplinary works look at modes of communication between people or groups. She is currently in the 56th Venice Biennale exhibition, *All the*

### Sonia BOYCE

Sutapa Biswas' personal narrative weaves throughout her work and encompasses themes of time and space particularly in relation to gender, identity and desire. Diverse in output, Biswas is known both for large-scale drawings (including works currently in the Tate Collection) and paintings, alongside more recent films. 'Magnesium Bird', a small painting about birth, and new works that take direct prints from her painting palette, create a link with the physicality of painting.

### Sutapa BISWAS

Guler Ates' work explores the experience of cultural displacement. Through performance and site-responsive activities she questions the relationship between the veil and the West. These images, from a residency at Leighton House, London, set cultural idioms in conversation with each other; a house influenced by eastern style, paid for by trade, and a female figure, completely covered, moving through the space.

### Guler ATES

Born in Turkey and now based in London

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Alison GILL

Alison Gill has re-made her piece ‘It’s All Over’ from 1993, which included the artist’s long plaits, sliced off and placed in a vitrine. A work inextricably linked to a moment in time or a rite of passage, the work was sold and subsequently ‘disappeared’. Twenty-two years later the artist is recreating the work, using hair bought on the internet, creating a multi-layered narrative on ageing, changing ideas of beauty, femininity and the values of production.

Helena GOLDWATER

Helena Goldwater’s sustained performance practice is represented in the exhibition by images from the beginning of her career through to more recent work, wearing what has become her iconic red dress. Throughout her career this dress has remained a constant as the performances have evolved. The familiarity of the objects that she uses in the performances: hair, milk, ice for example, offer potent moments of exchange and transformation - both actual and psychological.



Helena Goldwater, from ‘Once in a while it’s important to clear out your glory hole’, 1st Venice International Performance Art Week, 2012. Photo Monika Sobczak.

Joy GREGORY

One of the major artists to emerge from the Black British photography movement of the 1980s, Joy Gregory’s work engages with the discussions surrounding race, history, gender and aesthetics. Whilst social and political issues are integral to her practice, the work is rooted in the concepts of ‘truth and beauty’. In *Liberties* we show two works ‘Kitten Heels’ from the series ‘Girl Thing’ 2002–10, a cyanotype in which the shoes are contorted to suggest pieces of meat, and ‘Hair Grip’ from ‘Objects of Beauty’ 1992–95, an image recently used on the cover of a new edition of ‘The Second Sex’ by Simone de Beauvoir.

Margaret HARRISON

Founding the London Women’s Liberation Art Group in 1970, Margaret Harrison has been involved in art, action and feminism for four decades. Between 1973 and 1975 she collaborated with artists Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly to conduct a study of women’s work, reflecting in part on the changes in labour and industry brought about by the Equal Pay Act. The resulting findings were made into the installation ‘Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry 1973–1975’, first displayed at the South London Art Gallery in 1975. In 2013 Harrison won the prestigious Northern Art Prize. The diptychs on show at *Liberties* are representative of her ongoing questioning of gender inequality and the objectification of women.

Alexis HUNTER (1948–2014)

Alexis Hunter was a celebrated feminist artist who reflected on sexism and the politics of body image through much of

Freddie ROBINS



In 2011 Freddie Robins was commissioned as part of *Fifties, Fashion and Emerging Feminism*, at Collyer Bristow Gallery for which she made her haunting work, ‘He’s Behind You’. One drawing, also shown, has now been realised as one of Robins’ trademark knitted works, ‘Mad Mother’. The work, which describes a baby projecting from its parent’s head, is shown along with the wryly humorous ‘Bad Mother’, a burlesque voodoo object stabbed with knitting needles. Both works directly comment on the push-pull of creative practice with the demands of motherhood.

Monica ROSS (1950–2013)

Monica Ross continues to be celebrated for her powerful, political performance work. For *Liberties* we have worked with the artist’s archive, showing one image from the ‘Monument to Working Women’, a co-performance by Shirley Cameron, Monica Ross and Evelyn Silver in Rochdale 1985. Also on display is a suitcase containing props and notes from some of her performances. Her celebrated final work ‘Acts of Memory’: solo, collective and multi-lingual recitations from memory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reached its 60th and concluding performance at the 23rd session of the United

Freddie Robins, Bad Mother, 2013

Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland on the day she died, 14 June 2013. A recent collective recitation was held on Sunday 14 June 2015 at the British Library to coincide with the Exhibition *Magna Carta: Law, Liberty, Legacy*.



Monica Ross, ‘Monument to Working Women’ (Shirley Cameron/Monica Ross/Evelyn Silver), 1985 Photo: Patsy Mullan 1985/image restoration B.G. Mills 2005. Courtesy of the Artist’s estate and England & Co. Gallery

her photographic works. ‘Suffragette’, a hand-coloured Xerox mounted on paper by Hunter from 1968, is the earliest work on show in *Liberties* and depicts a group of contemporary women in bygone dress, marching with placards, echoing their suffragette predecessors. The concerns of these women of the ‘60s are writ large on their banners and highlight a women’s movement that focused predominantly on issues of female subjectivity.

Frances KEARNEY

Frances Kearney’s photographs are considered tableaux of complex relationships. Her series, ‘Like Mother Like Daughter’, explores the dynamics of the inter-dependence between mothers and daughters. For ‘Like Mother Like Daughter, III’, the mother, taking some ‘time out’, is sitting on the sofa linking drinking straws in a repetitive act. The elder daughter looks on holding the baby. Do we read this as neglect or as a moment of calm and a creative outlet from the all-consuming demands of childcare? Kearney is non judgemental, and the spiralling straws, a nod to the famous 1970s land art work ‘Spiral Jetty’ by Robert Smithson, suggests a creative internal landscape that exists beyond the persona of ‘mother’.

EJ MAJOR

EJ Major’s photographs deal with personal identity and the manipulation of image. Day+Gluckman showed her powerful series, ‘Marie Claire RIP’ and ‘Jezebel’, at Collyer Bristow Gallery, in 2013. For 2015 we have chosen works from Major’s series ‘Shoulder to Shoulder’, which uses archival images from the suffrage movement and footage of

contemporary protests. The artist herself re-enacts key moments, when the suffragette Mary Richardson attacked Velazquez’s ‘The Toilet of Venus’ (also known as the ‘Rokeby Venus’) with a knife, for example. By using her own portrait in the images Major continues the discussion, personally interrogating motive, and reflecting on the politics of today.

Eleanor MORETON

Eleanor Moreton is interested in the ‘mystery of depiction’ and how the viewer relates to the painted picture. Her subject matter dissects the cultures that produced the original source material from which she works, from genre paintings through to photographs and illustrations. ‘Nina’, ‘Aretha’ and ‘Gillian’ come from her series ‘Absent Friends’, a personal homage to the women musicians and writers that the artist admires. Moreton says of the women in the series that “*They are all women defined by their creativity and for whom a public image was secondary, undesirable or troublesome.*”

Hayley NEWMAN

Hayley Newman’s work and activism are inextricably mixed. Her performances and crafted objects stem from her interest in the roles of the individual and the collective, most recently in relation to current economic, social and ecological crises. For *Liberties* Newman is showing a small selection from her series ‘Domestique’; used, donated tea towels, dusters and dishcloths, which she has embroidered at home with trimmings, threads, beads and sequins to become an anthropomorphised mass of faces conveying a range of emotions.

Jo SPENCE (1934 –1992)

Jo Spence documented herself, sometimes dressed as others, to process the actions and responses to her politics and personal circumstances. For *Liberties* we show an image from her series ‘Photo Therapy’, and ‘A Session on Powerlessness’. The works acted as visual notes as well as autonomous works and were taken in collaboration with other artists to become part of a larger conversation. Dressed as her mother, Spence dons a headscarf and lights a cigarette. As a woman from the feminist movement of the 1970s, Spence’s generational experiences and politics would have been markedly different from that of her mother. An on-going element of feminism is its different guises and meaning for each generation in turn.

Jessica VOORSANGER

Originally from the Unites States, Jessica Voorsanger’s work takes the form of interactive installations, objects, performances and events. Critiquing pop culture and the cult of celebrity, the work is entrenched with humour, the politics of identity and mass consumption. Having lost her hair as a result of chemotherapy, Voorsanger turned to images of famous bald men to continue the idea of the ‘imposter’, a theme that she regularly works with. Day+Gluckman selected images by Voorsanger dressed as two iconic male artists, ‘Monet’ and ‘Henry Moore’ from her ‘Bald Series’ to particularly explore the relationship between identity and art practice.

Carey YOUNG

‘Donor Card’ by Carey Young considers the legal status of an artwork, the relationship between art and institutions and the critical analysis that is inherent in that exchange. The original work comprised an edition of five hundred credit card–size “donor cards”. The text on the card stated that it only took on the legal status of being an artwork when the viewer signed it, and that its status as art “*would only last as long as I was alive, or the viewer was alive, whichever was the shorter.*” The material for Young’s artistic practice, including the tools and mechanisms used across corporate and political disciplines, critiques the interconnection between economics, art, justice and politics.

Alice May WILLIAMS

Recent Goldsmiths graduate (2014) Alice May Williams tells stories through video, drawing, text, music and installation. Her MFA Degree show work ‘We Can Do It!’ resulted from the ‘googling’ of the words ‘Rosie the Riveter,’ the head-scarved American World War II icon, and the multitude of images that came alongside. She likes to “*dip in and out of different social groups, finding the gaps and overlaps in their identifying gestures, genres, colours, codes and languages*”, and to identify what it is that makes us part of a group.