

BODIES: SELF & SEX

22 November 2019 - 05 January 2020

KARIM HAMID | ELLIE HOWITT | CAMILLA HANNEY | ANISH KAPOOR | LUCY NEISH
LYDIA PETTIT | KEITH ROBERTS | JAMES TAILOR | ALISON WATT | TRADITIONAL AFRICAN ART

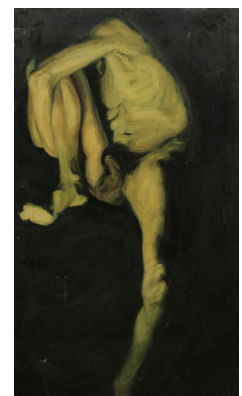


Lucy Neish, Detail of *Sit* (2019)

No 20 Arts
20 Cross Street
London N1 2BG

No 20 Arts is delighted to present BODIES: SELF AND SEX, a group show featuring works by Karim Hamid, Ellie Howitt, Camilla Hanney, Anish Kapoor, Lucy Neish, Lydia Pettit, Keith Roberts, James Tailor and Alison Watt, as well as ethnic African pieces. The exhibition wishes to present different approaches to exploring the self and sexuality as carried out by nine different artists. The contemporary perspective is complemented by various examples of traditional African artworks which reinforces the historic and ever-evolving interest of human beings in the perception of ourselves and our sexuality.

Figure Study (Male) by Karim Hamid is a prime example of the artist's early works. Citing Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach and Francis Bacon as his inspiration, Hamid describes his paintings as "psychic archaeology", by which he refers to the deviations from conventional portraiture that he employs to strip away his sitters from the superficial in order to reveal their inner essence. Striking disjunctions of perspective and proportion, games of light and shadow, and blurring and erasures are testimony to Hamid's exploration into how far he can push abstraction without losing his original subject matter.



Karim Hamid,
Figure Study (Male), 1990

After graduating from the Royal College of Art in 1998, Ellie Howitt came to prominence thanks to her bold, explicit language. Howitt takes inspiration from a range of historical depictions of women: pieces by other artists, pornographic photography or suggestive advertising imagery. The common denominator of all these sources is the idealisation of women in various levels of submission and their sexual objectification to cater to the male gaze.



Camilla Hanney, *Mother-of-pearl*, 2019

Growing up in Catholic Ireland informed Camilla Hanney's interest in guilt and shame relating to the female body and sexuality. Interested in the sexual connotations evoked by the viscosity of sea creatures such as oysters and octopuses, Hanney creates pristine delicate ceramic pieces intertwining these references with female figures.

Anish Kapoor is most famous for his curvy, enigmatic public sculptures that explore geometric forms, and range massively in size, material and colour. His drawings represent a more private and personal side of the artist's work. Of deep symbolic meaning to him, his works on paper are testimony to the influence of modernist abstraction on Kapoor, a movement known for its aim to move beyond the decorative into the sublime, inviting the viewers to the inner reaches of the imagination.



Anish Kapoor, *Untitled*, 1989

Contributing to the exhibition with paintings and drawings, Lucy Neish's work is characterised by the use of biomorphic androgynous forms in her quest to explore her knowledge of the body. Inspired by remembered experience and gathered imagery, through a process of layering and removal of paint, plaster and sand, the artist aims to awaken the viewer's tactile impulse, its desire to touch the surface in order to highlight our need for human contact and the relationships we form to establish a level of physical intimacy.



Lydia Pettit, *Dig*, 2019

Through her work, Lydia Pettit provides a brutally honest insight into the empowerment process she has gone through as a result of her life experience. Growing up in an environment where physical appearance was paramount, Pettit has struggled to find value in herself when her looks fell short of expectations. Becoming obsessed with the way she looked and other people's perception of her, the artist ended up in several abusive and traumatic relationships after which she has spent years rebuilding her self-confidence. She paints herself nude in order to regain control on how people see her body – bold brushstrokes emphasise her flesh, and tender moments in the bathroom are followed by the melodrama of depression and panic.

The drawings and paintings by Keith Roberts presented in this exhibition are based on images of the Jarawa Tribe, an indigenous group of the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. *Curiosity* gives name to a series of works where female and male bodies of various ages and sizes are depicted. By not preserving the identity of the individuals, Roberts' works highlight the universal qualities of the naked human body regardless of social constructs such as class, belief and race.

James Taylor's interest in the possibilities that assemblage gives allows him to move freely between media and styles. Taylor pairs discarded objects with acrylic paint which he obsessively reworks. Through draping, sculpting, casting and pleating, he reacts to the tensions inherent to the materials which mirror the foldings of his own personal traumas. After his father's passing away, Taylor started painting exclusively in pink, a liberating experience for its apparent links to his own sexuality and the possibility to direct it towards suggestions of the body, skin, entrapment, escape, fetish, intercourse, illness and mortality.



James Taylor,
Monochrome Composition 04, 2019

Alison Watt came to public attention in 1987 when she won the National Portrait Gallery's coveted annual award, becoming very well known for her paintings of figures, especially female nudes. From the mid-80s, for a period of about 10 years, she worked every day with a life model, something that she did deliberately to immerse herself in the study of the human figure. This over exposure to the body led her to move away from working directly from life. In her more recent work the bodies stopped being represented but their absence is invoked in her depictions of cloth and swathes of fabric.

About No 20 Arts

Opened in January 2017, No 20 Arts is a centre for contemporary arts. A multi-functional space, the gallery hosts a programme of exhibitions, performances and events that support emerging and established artists working across all media.

For more information and prices, please contact info@no20arts.com

No 20 Arts
20 Cross Street
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+44 (0)207 226 9083
info@no20arts.com
no20arts.com