

### **Could you tell us a little bit about yourself?**

I grew up in art studios and galleries in Bermondsey in South London so my art education was gleaned first-hand. I watched artists at work and at play, I saw them fail and succeed. Richard Wilson was around so I saw the difference success makes to an artist early on. Lots of those artists inspired me, most of them you won't have heard of, like Alex Rodgers. He scrawled onto walls and taught me that words are magic spells.

I don't have a favourite colour but I do have a killer collection of motorcycle jackets and roller ball pens.

### **How would you define your practice?**

Mixed media bisexual.

### **What's changed for you over the past year?**

Lots. I experienced a profound loss which prompted a relocation from South West to North by North West. My art's changed beyond recognition over the last year. I've moved on from my large scale 2D drawings and incorporated new technologies like 3D printing in order to create my new pieces. I let go of what I'd established and embraced a new way of working. It was the right move. I'm excited about what I'm creating again.

### **Have you had to alter your practice or the way that you realise your work to make it visible/accessible online?**

Absolutely, the transition from physical to digital shows has been a process. I've learnt that the secret is to treat the new technology as an opportunity. The artist is part philosopher, part barrow boy. I'm selling art like a fashion designer sells shoes, dropping collections throughout the year.

Collectors buy the artist as much as the art. One challenge for me is to show up to the camera and allow myself to be seen in a way that isn't always comfortable.

My future is a stronger relationship between the digital (from NFTs to OVRs) and the physical and the interplay between those realms. Let's get figital.

### **What attracts you to the history of Inanna and city of Babylon?**

The Jungian reading of proto epic poem 'The Descent of Inanna' hooked me. The poem articulates the personal shadow, the parts of ourselves that we repress and project onto others. It speaks of the hero's journey and the magic that is mined in the darkest of holes. The precursor to Inanna, Babalon, articulates an aspects of the feminine societal shadow – the unmanageable depths of the psyche which cannot be disciplined, ordered or contained.

I grew up in a home mired by addiction but the very fact that addiction was present was denied. I learnt to deny what was real and I grew monstrous. There is much to benefit from meeting the monsters that live under the bed, or perhaps even closer to home. My work embraces the personal and societal shadow because, now more than ever before, what is hidden must be seen.

### **How do you see this energy in a contemporary space?**

I enjoy tracing a line between ancient and modern. Sex and violence are inherent to humankind. As Osho says, 'society is just a clearing in a forest'. Uncontrollable forces live both inside and outside of ourselves (undeniable after the unprecedented events of 2020). This is as relevant today as it ever was.

### **How do myths and folklore play a role in your practice?**

Myths and folklore offer a glimpse into the psyche that cannot be accessed through purely rational realms.

The stories we tell ourselves define us, they influence our reality. Stories are part of our DNA. Even half-forgotten dreams offer fleeting narratives.

Growing up I didn't have a clear sense of my own story. I searched for a narrative that explained the beauty and the beastly nature of existence.

The stories that resonated with me, were Marion Woodman's *Leaving My Father's House* and Joseph Campbell's reading of *The Hero's Journey*. Both writers map out an exploration into ourselves, prompted by the desire to go to the edge of human experience and beyond.

It strikes me that the artist's life encapsulates the hero's journey on a daily basis. Every day the artist goes out into the unknown and faces a blank piece of paper and returns with something new, somehow changed by the experience.

### **Described in the bible as 'mother of harlots and abominations of the Earth', Babylon was a city of art and hedonism. How do you navigate contemporary modes of expectation and oppression through art?**

In the biblical reference to Babylon in Revelations, the god of one religion became the devil of the next. Daemon the creative muse, deeply tied to the unconscious, became demonic and the goddess tradition of sacro-sexual wisdom keepers were vilified. Woman resurfaced as Mary, the virgin. This is a founding narrative of western culture. Whether religious or not we are shaped by these ideas in the West.

The story of women's propensity for corruption continues from the fall through to the witch trials and beyond where women were portrayed as a dangerous inversion of the patriarchal and religious world order.

The resulting fantasy articulates, as Hugh B Urban says, 'Christianity's own denial of the body, nature and sexuality in a monstrously distorted form.'

We are forever eluding moral control.

**Your recent videos and prints are filled with movement and the seduction of the living female body. What does dance and music mean to you?**

Dance is an act of devotion. Dance and music exist outside the maps of language, they offer a way to connect the body to the earth and the heavens. The rebel body lives a secret life on the land late at night and the only rebellion left is the secret life. Music offers me a vehicle to play with words and to express things that can't be expressed anyplace else.

**Your paintings and videos often include great contrasts between the deep blacks and bright whites. How does light and dark affect the compositions and concepts of your videos and prints?**

I'm self-taught, I reduced my pallet to Indian ink on white paper as a way to learn composition. I spent time in Lipari as a kid and was very aware of the Italian masters like Caravaggio and the dark gothic of the catholic church, I was obsessed with gory religious relics and the white light spirit of the saints. Caravaggio's chiaroscuro hit me deep. Painters like Velasquez are painting themselves out of the dark. I can relate.

**There is a motif of commerce and a trading of thrills within your practice. What draws you to this hedonism that at once seems billboard shiny but is, at the same time, violent?**

We live in a society that uses fear and desire as primary motivating factors. In terms of cognitive functioning, mainstream culture operates mainly from the limbic brain as we're permanently in a state of fight or flight. Our pleasure receptors are constantly being stimulated by the connection provided by technological devices. We're stuck in patterns that make connection impossible whilst desiring connection above all things.

My drawings reflect the world we live in, turned up to 11. They use material sourced from advertising, pornography, newspaper headlines, horror movies and smart phone nudes and revel in the insanity of our consensual reality. Philippa Snow called them 'advertisements for sex and death as viewed through the glasses of *They Live*.' She kind of nailed it.

### **What does a temple mean to you?**

As Camille Paglia says, a temple is anywhere you kneel. To be honest, you don't even have to kneel.

### **Do you have any spaces that act as your temple?**

I believe that the art gallery is the modern-day temple. They are the only public space where hushed tones meet quiet contemplation. Apart from maybe sex shops.

### **What creatives are you currently following?**

I'm interested in how Hedi Xandt uses NFTs to sell both physical and intellectual aspects of his 3D work. Liv Fontaine's mix of punk drawings and performance at Richard Saltoun was refreshing. Caitlin Cherry's mix of panoramic painting and motorbike porn is seductive. Ariana Papademetropoulos' melange of myth and surrealism is beautiful.

Penny Slinger, the OG.

Tonia Nekkia McClodden – the multi layered content and presentation of her work is slick and deep.

I love the way Damien Hirst uses Instagram.

Glenn Belverio for the deliciously anarchic Glenda Orgasm archive.

### **Have you discovered any new sites, collectives or creatives recently that you think we know about?**

Clubhouse was a revelation. It's teeming with ground-breaking conversations, especially around art and technology and how they interact. I have a couple of invites. If anyone wants one hit me up. Scarlet Imprint are amazing independent publishers. I buy every book that Peter Grey writes.