

PI ARTWORKS LONDON



An Ode to Orlando

Curated by Marcelle Joseph

In collaboration with Ada Interiors

4 – 26 February 2022

55 Eastcastle Street, W1W 8EG, London

Jonathan Baldock
Gabriele Beveridge
Charlie Billingham
Victoria Cantons
Eileen Cooper
Sarah Dwyer
Pam Evelyn
Maeve Gilmore
Natalia Gonzalez-Martin
Mustafa Hulusi
Richard Malone
Alexi Marshall
Lindsey Mendick

Francesca Mollett
Annie Morris
Sola Olulode
Laurence Owen
Selma Parlour
Anousha Payne
Anna Perach
Glen Pudvine
Antonia Showering
Holly Stevenson
Zoe Williams
Lian Zhang

'I'm sick to death of this particular self. I want another.'

'For she had a great variety of selves to call upon, far more than we have been able to find room for, since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may have many thousand...and these selves of which we are built up, one on top of the other, as plates are piled on a waiter's hand, have attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own...and some are too wildly ridiculous to be mentioned in print at all.'

Orlando, Virginia Woolf (1928)

Pi Artworks proudly presents *An Ode to Orlando*, an expansive group exhibition curated by Marcelle Joseph, featuring a cross-generational and international group of artists alongside the inaugural collection of furniture designs by Ada Interiors. The exhibition reimagines the gallery space as the private home of a fictional art collector set in London in the present day. Based on Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, this particular aesthete – a passionate, brilliant and eccentric character who lives and breathes art - navigates fluidly through time and gender, au courant with the latest cultural trends and equally in tune with the past. Creating a dialogue between contemporary art and artisanal furniture, the exhibition is divided into two areas: a drawing room and a study, representing the twin selves of Orlando as both a man and a woman. Orlando's reimagined London residence will be a place of sanctuary and escape, a site that is beyond time as Woolf's *Orlando* lives for more than 300 years into modern times without ageing perceptibly. Here, we are forever young.

The furniture designs by Ada Interiors, stem from an appreciation of place, and the heritage of a family where lines are never drawn between art, literature, design and architecture. The founders of this new design house were empowered by the stories of generations of antecedents who were artists, designers, artisan fabric-makers, and often all three. In this exhibition, the story continues, celebrating the interaction and interpretation of materials in both art and design, as well as an attempt to fashion a visual text of sorts – possibly the *magnus opus* that Orlando was never able to finish writing in Virginia Woolf's novel. From Charlie Billingham's lustrous woven tapestry hanging on the wall to the hand-blown glass sculpture by Gabriele Beveridge, and from the cascading draped fabrics adorning fashion designer Richard Malone's figurative sculpture to Freud-meets-Feminism ceramic ashtrays by Holly Stevenson on top of the Golden Siggie desk, the art forms in this exhibition vacillate between art and design mediums to weave together a tale of an extraordinary art collector who does not live in any particular period of time - past, present or future - but instead an individual of indeterminate gender and impeccable taste who makes their own worlds come to life within the four walls of their domestic space. Filled with masterpieces collected over the years by artists and designers who have filled the connoisseur's home with laughter, debate and witty repartee, this 'Orlando' collects stories and conversations they have had with artists and designers as much as they collect actual art and design objects, building up a treasure trove of life experiences that 'Orlando' must commit to pen and paper before this priceless archive is lost to failing memory.

Woolf writes of Orlando that 'she had a great variety of selves to call upon' and 'Orlando's taste was broad; he was no lover of garden flowers only; the wild and the weeds even had always a fascination for him'. Here, Orlando can indulge their many selves and tastes through the images depicted on their walls, whether it be a dreamy abstract painting by Pam Evelyn that the viewer can get lost within for hours or the atmospheric painting by Antonia Showering that transports the viewer to its idyllic landscape setting. Jonathan Baldock's ceramic masks smile or wink back from the wall with their cheeky expressions, leaving the viewer begging to know what tidbit of juicy gossip they just heard, while Annie Morris's vibrantly hued stack sculpture stands regal beside Ada Interiors' furniture with design inspiration coming from late Georgian, Vienna Secession, Bauhaus and Mid-Century Modern furniture. Visitors may be compelled to stroke the lusciously glazed fantastical yet introspective vases by Lindsey Mendick. Equally, Glen Pudvine's large scale painting hanging above Orlando's desk in the study gives the viewer a lot to ponder with a tapir on the African savannah using his enormous prehensile male member to grip the same organ of the artist as depicted in a nude self-portrait.

The desire for other selves runs throughout this exhibition just as Orlando desired to be a poet who could be as at home in a working-class public house as the court of Queen Elizabeth I. But Orlando's own home was their true sanctuary and place of escape where fantasies could be spun into reality with just a glance onto their walls from the comfort of a gorgeously upholstered chair.

Many thanks to Maryam Eisler, The Estate of Maeve Gilmore, Emma Robertson and Jake Miller, Karen and Mark Smith, and Marcelle Joseph for the loans of their artworks to this exhibition

For the biographies of the artists, designer and curator, please scan the QR code below.



For detailed information, images and interviews please email to london@piartworks.com or jade@piartworks.com or send a WhatsApp message to +447718425153.