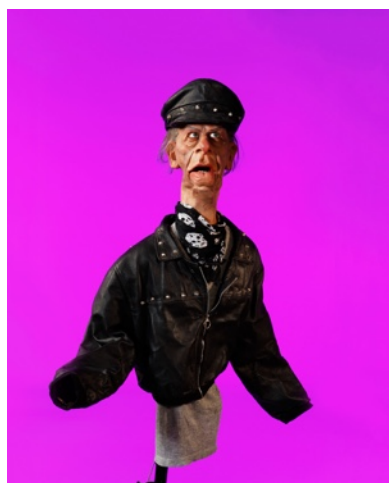


JAMES HYMAN GALLERY

Spitting: Photographs by Andrew Bruce & Anna Fox

22nd April - 8th May 2015



In the lead-up to the UK General Election in May, James Hyman Gallery presents *Spitting: Photographs by Andrew Bruce & Anna Fox*, an exhibition of never-before seen photographs by acclaimed British documentary photographer Anna Fox and rising star Andrew Bruce.

One of the most popular television programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, watched by an audience of 15 million people at its peak, *Spitting Image* was a British satirical show featuring puppet caricatures of prominent celebrities of the time, including international politicians and the British Royal Family, among others. The series was cancelled in 1996, but remains a seminal piece of British television. It has recently been announced that a brand new six-part series, entitled *Newzoids* and featuring modern-day personalities such as Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and Russell Brand, will air in 2015.

On the termination of the original series, James Hyman began to acquire some of the most important puppets used in the show for his private art collection, the Hyman Collection. A life-long fan of *Spitting Image*, Hyman believes that the life-size puppets should continue to be seen and enjoyed, and is delighted to be collaborating with photographers Fox and Bruce to bring these politicians back into the public eye in this important election year.



Echoing the garish photographs made by *Spitting Image* creators Peter Fluck and Roger Law before Martin Lambie-Nairn approached them to suggest adapting their creations for television, Fox and Bruce spent weeks in the studio working with a selection of the original puppets, crafting these ominous images. Photographed either against brightly coloured neon backdrops or shrouded by darkness, each image depicts a former Tory party member. Rendered in extraordinary detail on large format film, at times stripped of their clothing, every mark on the latex or foam is made visible and accentuated, including signs of **wear, fragility and decay**. Presented in this way, the puppets become **evocative emblems of a past era and a faded power**. There is an awkward tension in these photographs between the puppets as depiction of people, as cultural icons and also as crumbling modern artifacts. Key works in the exhibition include **Margaret Thatcher**, her predecessor **Edward Heath** and successor **John Major**, and cabinet ministers **Cecil Parkinson, Norman Tebbit, Michael Heseltine, Leon Brittan and Douglas Hurd**.



Fox and Bruce said: "Once we had them out of their packing cases, lying on the studio floor, the puppets looked broken, aged, decrepit and lacking any glimmer of life. **The orange latex protruded pathetically from underneath their clothing as we re-arranged them on the stand.** At one point, Norman Tebbit's head came off as if he was being decapitated by some unknown force. **The glamour faded, the sheen gone. Failed characters abandoned in storage...** *Spitting Image* was a great show that was made, in the wake of *Python*, at a time when humour really could be outrageous. These puppets, imbued with satire, represented our most significant politicians at their worst... Now, like all political fortunes, we are left with the remnants of a different age."

James Hyman said: "When I mentioned these puppets to the wonderful British photographer, Anna Fox, she was immediately excited by this crazy purchase and we discussed the possibility that she might photograph them. So I'm delighted that after a gap of some years the opportunity arose for her and Andrew Bruce to collaborate on these exciting new pictures. For me these new photographs, often on an enormous scale, are about more than recording appearance, although they do that in extraordinary detail, but are also about the expendability of politicians. **We are shown that beneath the veneer there is fragility, underneath the power-dressing there is vulnerability.** These photographs remind me of right-wing politician Enoch Powell's assertion that "all political careers end in failure."

Hyman continues: "One of my favourite pictures shows the puppets dumped in a pile on the floor as though ready to be swept away as garbage. **But whilst it may be true that these puppets have lost some of their shine, through *Spitting Image* and now these remarkable photographs, these politicians have achieved a form of immortality.**"

Images (top to bottom):
Norman Tebbit, Pigment Print, 2015
Margaret Thatcher, Pigment Print, 2015
Edward Heath, Pigment Print, 2015
 All images copyright Andrew Bruce & Anna Fox, courtesy James Hyman Photography, London

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About the Artists:

Anna Fox is one of the most acclaimed British photographers of the last 25 years. Working in colour, Fox studied under Martin Parr, Paul Graham and Karen Knorr, and is influenced by the British documentary tradition. She first came to attention with her 1988 study of London office culture in the mid-Thatcher years, entitled *Workstations*.

Fox is perhaps best known for *Zwarte Piet* (1993-8), a series of 20 portraits taken over a five year period that explore Dutch 'black-face' folk traditions. Other projects have included *The Village* (1992), a multi-media collaboration with the writer Val Williams that examines the experiences of rural women, and *Friendly Fire*, which records the leisure activity of paintballing in the manner of war reportage. From 2009, Fox photographed for two years at Butlins in Bognor Regis for her book, *Resort 1 - Butlins Bognor Regis*.

Fox's work has been exhibited extensively across the globe, at leading institutions including the Tate and The Photographer's Gallery in the UK, and the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago. In 2010, she was shortlisted for the prestigious Deutsche Börse Photography Prize. Fox is currently Professor of Photography at the University for the Creative Arts, Farnham.

Andrew Bruce is an artist working primarily with photography. He has worked alongside Anna Fox on a number of projects, having initially studied under her at the University for the Creative Arts before later obtaining his MA at the Royal College of Art.

His work focuses primarily on the representation of nature both in relation to culture and to the natural world itself. Bruce's meticulously staged photographs carefully slip between real and unreal, still-life scenes and fleeting moments (or in this case images that seem neither still-life nor portraiture). Bruce has exhibited in group shows both in the UK and also internationally at festivals such as Goa International Photo Festival and Les Rencontres d'Arles, and also solo exhibitions at Cabin Gallery in London and Galleri Box in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Bruce was a recipient of a British Council grant in 2010 and was selected for *Fresh Faced* and *Wild Eyed* at the Photographers' Gallery after his graduation. More recently Bruce was nominated for the Prix Pictet award. Bruce also lectures extensively on the subject of photography in universities, museums and has contributed to educational publications.

About James Hyman Gallery:

James Hyman Gallery is the UK's foremost commercial gallery for vintage 19th and 20th century photography. The gallery holds a substantial inventory of rare and museum-quality vintage photographs from the early days of British and French photography, through European and American Modernism, to the present day.

The gallery is a leading specialist in British Photography and represents many of the most important British photographers working today, especially those engaged in forms of subjective or contemporary documentary practice. Contemporary British photographers represented include Anna Fox, Ken Grant, Mark Power, Andy Sewell and Jon Tonks. The gallery also works with the Estate of André Kertész and is proud to represent the celebrated French New Wave photographer Raymond Cauchetier.

James Hyman Gallery is also a market leader in 20th century British art, specialising in 20th century painting, especially by the Camden Town School, St Ives artists, Kitchen Sink painters and the School of London; sculpture, especially by the post-war Geometry of Fear Sculptors; British Pop Art; and limited edition prints. The gallery is proud to represent a select group of artists, including Dennis Creffield and Derrick Greaves, as well as the Estates of Michael Andrews, Peter de Francia, Robert Medley and Edward Middleditch.

About Dr. James Hyman:

James Hyman received his doctorate from the Courtauld Institute in London, where he subsequently taught. He worked for the Saatchi Collection, Christie's and Helly Nahmad Gallery before opening his own gallery in 1999. A respected academic and art historian, his book, *The Battle for Realism. Figurative Art in Britain during the Cold War, 1945-1960* (Yale University Press, 2001) was shortlisted for the W. B. Berger Prize for studies in British Art History.

James Hyman is a world expert on Modern British art and photography from the 19th century to the present day. He is a leading authority on and supporter of British photography and will launch a new educational website devoted to British photography in early 2015.