

IKON

Ikon Gallery
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ART AT HMP GRENDON *THERE IS NO MASTERPIECE* 26 January – 16 March 2023

Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio, HMP Grendon, Buckinghamshire



Fae Kilburn, *Winter Explorations*. From the series *Transient Moments* (2021). Silkscreen print. Image courtesy the artist.

Ikon presents *There is no masterpiece* (26 January – 16 March 2023), the first exhibition at the *Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio* at HMP Grendon, Buckinghamshire.

The exhibition features work by four artists – Simon Faithfull, Fae Kilburn, Aidan Moesby and John Yeadon – selected in response to Ikon's recent exhibition *Edward Lear: Moment to Moment*. Each artist delivers a creative workshop at HMP Grendon, exploring Lear's legacy in the field of visual art, while introducing the prisoners to techniques of collagraphy, printmaking and drawing. A selection of artworks produced by the prisoners will be added to the exhibition.

The prisoners previously met Matthew Bevis, Professor in English Literature at University of Oxford, who introduced Lear's landscape drawings in relation to his poetic practice, observing:

“The pictured moment, for Lear, is not an epiphany. It does not offer revelation, and it shies away from eventfulness. If anything, it seems to exist in a kind of “meanwhile”, resting alongside other moments or apprehending itself as part of a series.”

About the work

Simon Faithfull has noticed a correspondence between Lear's observational sketches and his own itinerant drawing practice, which captures moments and places. Both artists depict travel to locations such as Lake Como, Italy, and the Bosphorus Strait, Turkey, as well as noting the precise time of the sketch, alongside other details. For instance, *Drawing no.729: Towards Blevio* (2011), a digital drawing made by Faithfull on a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), depicts a small ship on the coast of Lake Como. Text underneath the image discloses the title, time, date and coordinates, emphasising that this work is a snapshot of a moment in time.

Fae Kilburn's series of silkscreen prints, *Transient Moments* (2021) is a celebration of her perspective as a neurodivergent and partially sighted artist. The work reimagines the landscape through the eyes of a visually impaired individual. The handmade prints replicate the artist's experience of the landscape, and her perception of colour, which has changed to beautiful translucent tones in daylight and monochromes in the evening. Like Lear, Kilburn has epilepsy and seeks inspiration and sanctuary in the landscape.

Aidan Moesby presents the moving image work and installation *I can feel the changing of the seasons* (2021) which uses above and below water as an emotional metaphor. A pair of children's wellington boots are a symbol of hope in the face of climate catastrophe. In addition, several prints by Moesby including *Off to Never Never Land* (2013), *Penguin* (2015) and *Symbols are not the same as emotions* (2016), use simple imagery to draw attention to the relationship between the weather, the natural world and our mental health.

John Yeadon's *Englandia* (2012-2021), twenty-four landscape paintings in portrait orientation, explore notions of national identity. For the artist, the works are a series of follies – some architectural, whilst others are a human folly of political corruption. Yeadon's paintings are intended to subvert and challenge myths, preconceptions and contradictions surrounding Englishness and national identity. Like Lear, these works were made in series and depict a limited view of the landscape in the distance, where perspective is flattened, like a glimpse out of a train.

About Art at HMP Grendon

The Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust has funded Art at HMP Grendon for twelve years. During this period, Ikon has managed two artist residencies – Edmund Clark (2014 – 2018) and Dean Kelland (2019 – 2023) – resulting in major exhibitions at Ikon Gallery and HMP Grendon.

With a focus on the development of the prisoners' artistic practice, Ikon has opened the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio at HMP Grendon – a dedicated space for workshops, in printing and painting, and a changing programme of exhibitions, art historical and contemporary. Future exhibitions will include presentations of work by Australian painter Sidney Nolan (1917 – 1992) and Austrian artist Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (1906 – 1996). The residency runs alongside a

public programme of research symposia and events at Ikon, allowing a platform for public discourse on the role of art in criminal justice.

For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Rebecca Small by email r.small@ikon-gallery.org or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.

Social Media Handles - Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @ikongallery #IkonGallery
Instagram: @aidanmoesby, @faekilburn, @yeardonjohn, @simonfaithfull

Notes to Editors:

1. Please note HMP Grendon is a Category B prison and is not accessible to the public. Ikon hosts a series of events at the prison each year for a limited number of invited guests. Please contact Rebecca Small r.small@ikon-gallery.org for more information.
2. Opened in Buckinghamshire in 1962, HMP Grendon adopted a psychiatric model of practice, developed in the aftermath of the Second World War, to treat post-traumatic stress disorder. It later became a therapeutic community; notably the only one of its kind in Europe. A Category B prison, community members undertake daily therapy, including art therapy and psychodrama, towards their rehabilitation. Each of its five wings operate as autonomous therapeutic communities, working and making decisions on behalf of each other.
3. The Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust was set up in 1992 by the Austrian émigré artist Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (1906-1996) for the promotion of her work, the charitable support of the arts and other charitable objects as stated on the charity's website. Dean Kelland's term at Grendon is the third residency supported by the Trust since 2010.
4. Simon Faithfull's practice is an attempt to understand and explore the planet as a sculptural object – to test its limits, to sense its processes and to report back on how it feels. Within his work he often travels to new contexts and learns from people, scientists and technicians. Recent projects include a body of work made in a watery, modernist ruin found off the coast of Florida; a journey across Europe and Africa tracing the 0^o Greenwich Meridian; a live video-transmission from the deliberate sinking of a ship to create an artificial reef and a film featuring the artist walking the perimeter of a shrinking island.
5. Fae Kilburn is a Birmingham based printmaker, arts facilitator, researcher and disability advocate. Specialising in a variety of processes including mono print, etching and collagraphy, Kilburn's work is inspired by history, disability, identity and the natural environment. The artist often refers to the lived experiences of other disabled people in her art. Creating disability awareness through art is an important part of her practice. Equally, the artist shares perspectives of disability through research in consultation with disabled artists, organisations and galleries.

6. Aidan Moesby is a curator, artist and writer exploring civic and personal wellbeing through a body of work that includes both Disability Arts and mainstream representation particularly where art, health and technology intersect. He also works as a consultant within disability access and justice in the cultural sector for institutions such as Wellcome Collection, British Council and festivals including Abandon Normal Devices. In 2020 he was the first Disabled Curator in Residence at MIMA (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) as part of the Future Curators Programme.
7. Over five decades, John Yeadon's artistic practice has explored issues of politics, sexuality, food, national identity, the grotesque and carnival. A painter and printmaker, who also experiments with digital and photographic techniques, Yeadon embraces the pornographic, humorous, oppositional, disquieting, difficult, obsessive and unfashionable. In 2022 Ikon and SHOUT Festival produced a solo exhibition of selected works from Yeadon's archive, presented alongside Ikon's exhibition *Edward Lear: Moment to Moment*. The exhibition considered what is 'seen' and 'unseen' in Lear's landscapes, including his complex attitude towards his homosexuality.
8. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Education Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art.
9. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. ACE support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, ACE will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.