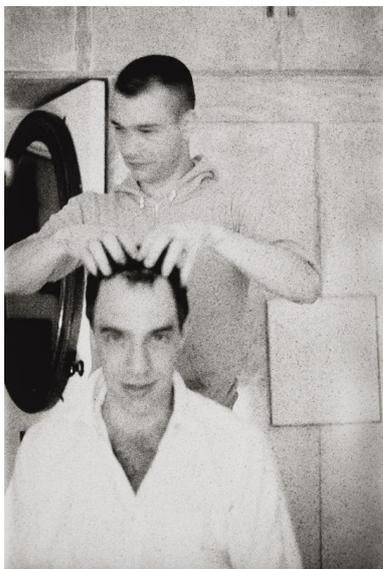


News Release

Thursday 16 March 2017

MAGGI HAMBLING, GILBERT & GEORGE, DEREK JARMAN ... UNSEEN IMAGES OF 1980s LONDON ART AND CLUBS SCENE ON DISPLAY FOR FIRST TIME AT NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



Derek Jarman and John Maybury by David Gwinnutt, c.1982–83 © David Gwinnutt; **Maggi Hambling** by David Gwinnutt, 1984 © David Gwinnutt; **Cerith Wyn Evans** by David Gwinnutt, circa 1984 © David Gwinnutt

A new display of photographs, documenting the 1980s London art and club scene has opened at the National Portrait Gallery, London, it was announced today, Thursday 16 March 2017. The display features portraits of Leigh Bowery, Derek Jarman and Gilbert & George, many of which have not been previously exhibited.

The display coincides with the acquisition by the Gallery of 14 portraits by the photographer David Gwinnutt that includes unseen images of artists Maggi Hambling and Duggie Fields, fashion designers Stephen Linard and David Holah and film makers Derek Jarman and John Maybury.

The display **David Gwinnutt: Before We Were Men** (until 24 September 2017) captures the generation of young creatives that emerged in London against a backdrop of financial recession and unemployment in the early 1980s. The photographs of male directors, writers, designers and artists who together formed a vibrant and influential underground gay culture. Gwinnutt documented this scene while still at art college, having moved to London from Derbyshire in 1979.

Two of the portraits acquired by the Gallery but not on display, are unseen portraits of film producer Alison Owen, mother of singer Lily Allen, whose credits as a producer include *Elizabeth* (1998), *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2007), *Brick Lane* (2007), *Saving Mr. Banks* (2013) and *Tulip Fever* (2017); and museum director Malcolm Rogers, former Curator of 16th and 17th Century Collections at the National Portrait Gallery and until 2015 Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



John Maybury by David Gwinnutt, 1982-1983 © David Gwinnutt; **Duggie Fields** by David Gwinnutt, 1982 © David Gwinnutt; **Stephen Linard** by David Gwinnutt, c.1982-83 © David Gwinnutt; **David Hollah** by David Gwinnutt, c.1984 © David Gwinnutt

While his work is rooted in the city's vibrant underground club scene, Gwinnutt chose to capture these sitters away from the lights and publicity of the clubs such as *Blitz* in Covent Garden. Gwinnutt photographed these men in the intimacy of their homes, often squats or rented council accommodation.

Most of these men were studying at art college by day and transforming into *poseurs* by night, escaping the bleak realities of Thatcherite Britain through handmade clothes and elaborate make up which blurred genders and refashioned identities.

The title 'Before We Were Men' indicates that this London scene was made up of young men, who in the following years would go on to become influential in the worlds of art, film, fashion and music. The display also celebrates the 1980s as a moment when figures such as Leigh Bowery and Trojan, also photographed by Gwinnutt, began to play with gender identity and redefine the idea of what a man could be.

Sabina Jaskot-Gill, Curator of **David Gwinnutt: Before We Were Men**, and Associate Curator of Photographs, National Portrait Gallery, London, says: 'Using only his handheld camera and natural light, Gwinnutt's grainy black and white photographs feel unguarded and spontaneous, offering a glimpse into the private worlds of these rising stars who lived, worked and played together, a network of subversive collaborators. Gwinnutt's photographs serve as a social document of a moment that had far-reaching effects on the cultural landscape.'



Gilbert & George by David Gwinnutt, c.1981-82 © David Gwinnutt; **Sir Norman Rosenthal** by David Gwinnutt, 1981-1982 © David Gwinnutt; **Alison Owen** by David Gwinnutt, circa 1984 © David Gwinnutt

David Gwinnutt (b. 1961) is an artist and photographer. During his long career he has known and photographed many of the most influential gay people from the last 30 years. In 2013 he was voted 16th on *The Independent's* Pink List of the top 100 most influential gay people in Britain for creating the Pink

Jack, a symbol of modern Britain and gay pride. Born in Derbyshire, Gwinnutt graduated from Middlesex University in 1984. He was part of the 'Blitz Kid' group and the subsequent *avant garde* crowd that fuelled the club scene of 1980's London. His un-posed portraits, taken in intimate settings away from the club scene, show us the private side of his subjects and offer us a candid insight into their world.

David Gwinnutt: Before We Were Men forms part of a year-long programme of special displays and events, entitled 'I am me,' at the National Portrait Gallery exploring sexuality, gender, art and identity.

This will include, opening 27 March, a display of the work of the contemporary Lebanese artist Akram Zaatari who has selectively appropriated images from the archive of the Lebanese studio photographer Hashem el Madani, active in Saida, Lebanon from the 1950s, and presents them in new contexts. The display features a selection of Madani's images, in which two people of the same sex kiss or tenderly embrace, to explore the strict moral codes of Lebanese culture.

There is also *Speak its Name!* a display of photographic portraits to marking the fiftieth anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of male homosexuality in England and Wales in 1967. This display includes portraits of fashion designer Alexander McQueen and journalist Isabella Blow, politician Angela Eagle, actors Ben Whishaw and Saffron Burrows, poet Jackie Kay, diver Tom Daley and singer Will Young. Their portraits are accompanied by quotations from the sitters who share their experiences of coming out. These range from coming out to friends and family, to wanting to be honest to their fans and the media.

Also as part of the *I am me* season, the Gallery's spring exhibition, now open, **Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun: Behind the mask, another mask** draws together over 100 works by French artist Claude Cahun (1894–1954) and British contemporary artist Gillian Wearing (b.1963). While they were born seventy years apart, they share similar themes around gender, identity, masquerade and performance.

DISPLAY:

David Gwinnutt: Before We Were Men Room 39, Admission Free (16 March – 24 September 2017)

EVENT: In Conversation: Before we were men: David Gwinnutt and guests

23 March 2017 19:00 Tickets: £8 (£7 concessions and Gallery Supporters)

Photographer David Gwinnutt talks about his display which chronicles the 1980s London art and club scene with Dr Ian Massey, biographer of artist Patrick Proctor, filmmaker John Maybury and journalist Paul Gorman. Enjoy special super 8 film screenings by John Maybury and a DJ set by Jeffrey Hinton in the Main Hall from 18.00 – 21.50. <http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/late-shift-1/in-conversation-23032017>

Also in I am me - A season exploring art and identity at the National Portrait Gallery:

Akram Zaatari Room 33, Admission Free (27 March – 3 September 2017)

Speak its Name! Balcony Gallery, Admission Free (25 November 2016 – 6 August 2017)

Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun: Behind the Mask, another Mask

Lerner Contemporary Galleries, Admission charge (9 March – 29 May 2017)

For further press information and image requests please contact: Neil Evans, Media Relations Manager, National Portrait Gallery, London Tel: 020 7312 2452 (not for publication) Email: nevans@npg.org.uk

Press images: npg.org.uk/press

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10am – 6pm (Gallery closure commences at 5.50pm) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10am – 9pm (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463

NOTE TO EDITORS - DAVID GWINNUTT: BEFORE WE WERE MEN - THE PORTRAITS ON DISPLAY

DUGGIE FIELDS b.1945

The artist Duggie Fields is celebrated for his large-scale canvasses featuring bright blocks of colour and razor edged outlines. Gwinnutt photographed Fields in his Earls Court flat, in front of his painting *Lakshmi*, a tribute to the Hindu goddess of good fortune. Fields's forelock of hair is neatly encased in the lines of his painting, a subtle detail that transforms the photograph into a play of shapes and tones, with a flatness that is characteristic of Fields's work. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, 1982, printed 2016 x199661*

DEREK JARMAN 1942–94

Gwinnutt was introduced to 'maverick radical of British cinema' Derek Jarman during a screening at the London Film-Makers' Co-op in Camden, which also featured the work of Cerith Wyn Evans and John Maybury. This photograph was taken early one morning during a visit to Jarman's flat above the Phoenix Theatre on Charing Cross Road. Having just awoken, Jarman was exasperated by this request to be photographed but agreed, and the double portrait captures his playful vexation. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, 1982, printed 2016 x199665*

LEIGH BOWERY 1961–94

Gwinnutt first encountered the influential performance artist Leigh Bowery outside *Heaven* nightclub in Charing Cross, and remembered being enthralled by his outlandishly experimental dress sense. Gwinnutt arranged to photograph Bowery at his council flat in East London, described by visitors as 'a temple of kitsch'. Posing before *Star Trek* wallpaper, Gwinnutt's portrait captures the extrovert in a moment of contemplation and allows a rare study of Bowery's face, usually camouflaged by make-up or costume. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1983, printed 2016 x199663*

JOHN MAYBURY b.1958

Derek Jarman introduced Gwinnutt to the filmmaker John Maybury: 'Derek really liked the photographs I had taken of him and asked me who I'd most like to photograph. I said David Bowie. He laughed and said I should photograph John Maybury.' Maybury was prominent in the British underground film movement, and with Evans and Jarman pioneered a style of 'untrammelled excess' using rich colour, elaborate theatricality and hallucinogenic visuals. This meditative portrait was taken one morning in Maybury's Camden flat as he smoked his first cigarette of the day. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1982–83, printed 2016 x199675*

DEREK JARMAN 1942–94; JOHN MAYBURY b.1958

Filmmaker Derek Jarman was at the centre of the queer art scene, and the group of young artists and designers who defined it. Jarman and his *protégé* John Maybury were frequent collaborators. Maybury's tactile gesture in this portrait speaks to their closeness. Jarman revelled in having his picture taken and liked to stare intensely down the lens. Maybury in contrast tried to avert his gaze from the camera. The graininess of the image lends a sensual and dream-like quality, echoing the visuals in the experimental Super 8 films both men were producing. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1982–83, printed 2016 x199674*

CERITH WYN EVANS b.1958

The artist Cerith Wyn Evans was photographed at the Royal College of Art on the set of his film *Epiphany*, which took inspiration from the London club scene and featured friends such as Leigh Bowery. The film embodied a style of vivid, baroque aestheticism, but Gwinnutt's portrait of Evans is notable for its stark austerity. Evans's films were screened alongside those of Derek Jarman and John Maybury and he was selected by Norman Rosenthal for inclusion in the *Sensation* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1997. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1984, printed 2016 x199669*

SIR NORMAN ROSENTHAL b.1944

Gwinnutt met the curator Norman Rosenthal at *Planets* nightclub in Piccadilly, where he was accompanied by the artists Gilbert & George. Having asked to take his picture, a shoot was arranged in Rosenthal's flat opposite the Royal Academy, where he served as Exhibitions Secretary. The flat was sparsely furnished with nowhere to sit except the floor, where Rosenthal reclines. While his body appears relaxed, his eyes remain nervous and wary. Gwinnutt recalled, 'I felt all the time that he was observing me'. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1981–82, printed 2016 x199667*

STEPHEN LINARD b.1959

Gwinnutt photographed fashion designer Stephen Linard the year after he graduated from St Martin's School of Art and staged his first catwalk show of 'mean and moody menswear', which propelled him to overnight success. Linard was prominent among the *Blitz* crowd for his eclectic personal style, always flamboyantly dressed with immaculate make-up. Gwinnutt photographed him away from this scene, in the intimacy of his King's Cross flat. Linard gazes directly at the lens in a quietly intense image that allows a glimpse behind his club persona. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1982–83, printed 2016 x199668*

DAVID HOLAH b.1958

Fashion designer David Holah co-founded the era-defining clothing label *BodyMap* in 1982, together with Stevie Stewart. Their daring and gender ambiguous designs were an immediate hit, hailed as 'the hottest, most visually arresting company in Britain's design renaissance'. Gwinnutt photographed Holah during a dinner party in Bloomsbury as he reclined on a sofa, his minimalist and relaxed attire in stark contrast to the innovative shapes and distinctive prints of his *BodyMap* designs. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1984, printed 2016 x199662*

GILBERT & GEORGE b.1943; b.1942

Gwinnutt arranged a portrait sitting with the artists Gilbert & George after meeting them at *Planets* nightclub in Piccadilly, where they were accompanied by the curator Norman Rosenthal. In their formal suits, the artists stood out from the rest of the club crowd, and Gwinnutt felt they must be important so approached them to take their picture. The duo adopted the identity of 'living sculptures' in both their art and their daily life, but here Gwinnutt shows them at ease, photographed at their home in East London. *By David Gwinnutt (b.1961) Gelatin silver print, c.1981–82, printed 2016 x199670*