

News Release

Wednesday 6 March 2019

MARTIN PARR'S NEW AND PREVIOUSLY UNSEEN PHOTOGRAPHS OF BREXIT BRITAIN GO ON DISPLAY IN MAJOR NEW EXHIBITION



Photographer, Martin Parr alongside his work in the National Portrait Gallery exhibition, *Only Human: Martin Parr*. Photographs by Jorge Herrera.

Only Human: Martin Parr,

National Portrait Gallery London, 7 March – 27 May 2019

Supported by Gucci and the Bern Schwartz Family Foundation

New and previously unseen photographs which reveal photographer Martin Parr's take on the social climate in the aftermath of the EU referendum, have gone on public display for the first time in a major new exhibition of works by one of Britain's best-known and most widely celebrated photographers at the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Only Human: Martin Parr, brings together some of Parr's best known photographs with new work by Parr never exhibited before, to focus on one of his most engaging subjects – people. Featuring portraits of people from around the world, the exhibition examines national identity today, both in the UK and abroad with a special focus on Parr's wry observations of Britishness. As well as Britain in the time of Brexit, the exhibition focuses on the British Abroad including photographs made in British Army camps overseas, and Parr's long term study of the British 'Establishment' including recent photographs taken at Christ's Hospital school in Sussex, Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the City of London, revealing the obscure rituals and ceremonies of British life.



Stone Cross Parade, St George's Day, West Bromwich, the Black Country, England, 2017; Preparing lobster pots, Newlyn Harbour, Cornwall, England, 2018.

Picture credits: © Martin Parr / Magnum Photos / Rocket Gallery

Although best known for capturing ordinary people, Parr has also photographed celebrities throughout his career. For the first time **Only Human: Martin Parr** reveals a selection of portraits of renowned personalities, most of which have never been exhibited before, including British fashion legends Vivienne Westwood and Paul Smith, contemporary artists Tracey Emin and Grayson Perry and world-renowned football player Pelé.

Other new works explore the quirks of leisure activities today, a subject Parr has explored since the 1980s. Parr photographs trips to the beach, tennis tournaments – from Wimbledon to the US Open – and a day at the races, to reveal the eccentricities of everyday life. These images take the visitor on a colour-saturated journey through places where public and private worlds intersect. Other photographs capture the infectious joy of dancing, an everyday activity enjoyed by people across the globe.

Only Human: Martin Parr also features the unforgettable self-portraits Parr has made throughout his career. For over thirty years, Parr has visited studio photographers, street photographers and photo booths across the globe to have his portrait taken. The resulting *Autoportraits* raise questions about portraiture and the business of portrait photography, showcasing a range of fascinating and often humorous settings employed by professional portraitists. Works on display include his *Photo Escultura*, a group of shrine-like carved photo-sculptures, based on Parr's likeness and commissioned from the last remaining traditional maker in Mexico City, which have never been exhibited in the UK before.

The exhibition also includes a pop up café inspired by Martin Parr's iconic food photography and the traditional British 'caff'. Visitors can purchase a selection of Great British tea-time treats and beverages such as a 'nice cup of

tea’ and a slice of Battenberg, or an exclusive ‘Only Human’ beer created in collaboration with British craft brewery Lost and Grounded Brewers, Bristol during the Gallery’s Friday Lates (18.00 – 21.00).



The Perry Family – daughter Florence, Philippa and Grayson, London, England, 2012; Vivienne Westwood, designer, London, England, 2012. Porthcurno, Cornwall, England, 2017. Picture credits: © Martin Parr / Magnum Photos / Rocket Gallery;

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, London, said: “We are delighted to be able to display so many new works by one of Britain’s most widely-celebrated photographers in this major new exhibition. Martin Parr’s witty, surprising and ingenious photographs not only reveal the eccentricities of modern life with affection and insight, they also change the way we look at ourselves, and the way we consider our relationship to the wider world. *Only Human* contributes to an ongoing debate about what it means to be British in an international context and reflects on the shared cultural and social history that defines the United Kingdom during a moment of change.”

Martin Parr says: “I am very excited to have the opportunity to show my work at such a prestigious Gallery. One of the main themes is British identity and given March 2019 is when we are supposedly leaving the European Union, the timing could not be better.”

Philip Prodger, curator of *Only Human: Martin Parr* says “Provocative, surprising, and ultimately uplifting, Martin Parr explores the great issues of our time with sensitivity, compassion and a sense of fun. This is an exhibition that will make you think, and leave you with a smile on your face.”

Only Human: Martin Parr is curated by Dr. Phillip Prodger, Senior Research Scholar, Yale Center for British Art.

PUBLICATION

Phaidon have published a new book on Martin Parr’s work to accompany the exhibition. The most comprehensive volume on Parr’s work since his 2002 monograph, ***Only Human*** features over 200 images by Parr, many featuring in the exhibition, alongside newly commissioned and enlightening essays by exhibition curator, Phillip Prodger, and an introduction by Grayson Perry.

Only Human: Martin Parr, 7 March – 27 May 2019 at the National Portrait Gallery, London www.npg.org.uk

Tickets without donation £18

Tickets with donation £20

Free for Members and Patrons

npg.org.uk/martinparr

£5 ticket for under 25s

Every Friday the Gallery will make 500 £5 tickets available to anyone aged under 25. Under 12s are free and family tickets are also available. Tickets are subject to availability on a first come, first served basis and can be booked online or in person at the Gallery. Proof of age will be required.

Only Human Instagram Competition

To coincide with the opening of the exhibition, the Gallery is launching a new Instagram competition asking visitors to create their own photographic portraits reflecting on what British identity means to people today. To enter share your photograph, inspired by the themes of the exhibition, through Instagram using the hashtag #OnlyHumanNPG or #OnlyHuman21 for entrants aged 21 and under. The winning entries, selected by Martin Parr, will go on display at the National Portrait Gallery. For full details and terms and conditions visit npg.org.uk/martinparr

Supported by Gucci

GUCCI

Supported by the Bern Schwartz Family Foundation

Spring Season 2019 sponsored by Herbert Smith Freehills LLP

For further press information please contact: Laura McKechan, Senior Communications Manager, National Portrait Gallery, Tel. 020 7321 6620, lmckechan@npg.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Martin Parr (b. 1952) has published over one hundred books of his own work, and edited a further thirty. Prolific in his activities, Parr has featured in more than a hundred exhibitions worldwide, including the 2002 retrospective *Martin Parr Photoworks 1971-2000* at the Barbican, London, which toured Europe for the following five years. Recent exhibitions curated by Parr include: *Strange and Familiar* at the Barbican, London (2016); *New Documents* at the Brighton Photo Biennale (2010); and *Parrworld* at Haus de Kunst Munich (2008). In 2004, Parr served as Guest Artistic Director for Rencontres D'Arles. Parr's work has been collected by many of the major museums, including the Tate, the Pompidou and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1994 he became a full member of Magnum Photographic Cooperative and was elected president of Magnum Photos International (2013-2017). Parr is a Visiting Professor at Ulster University.

Parr studied photography at Manchester Polytechnic in the early 1970s and formed an integral part of a new wave of documentary photographers who revolutionised the genre. He achieved international recognition for photographic projects, such as *The Last Resort* (1983-85) and *The Cost of Living* (1987-89), which take an intimate, satirical and anthropological look at aspects of modern life, in particular, documenting the social classes of England and the increasing consumerism of the Western world. In 2017, Parr opened the Martin Parr Foundation, a new centre for British photography in Bristol, which aims to support and promote photographers who have made, and continue to make, important work focused on the British Isles.

Phaidon is the premier global publisher of the creative arts with over 1,500 titles in print. We work with the world's most influential artists, chefs, writers and thinkers to produce innovative books on art, photography, design, architecture, fashion, food and travel, and illustrated books for children. Phaidon is headquartered in London and New York City.

Phaidon Press information contact: Ellen Bashford, Publicity Manager, Tel: +44 20 7843 1059, Email: ebashford@phaidon.com

Gucci

Founded in Florence in 1921, Gucci is one of the world's leading luxury fashion brands, with a reputation for creativity, innovation, and Italian craftsmanship. Gucci is part of Kering, a global Luxury group, which manages the development of a series of renowned maisons in fashion, leather goods, jewelry, and watches. For further information, visit www.gucci.com

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday: 10.00 – 18.00 (Gallery closure commences at 17.50) **Late Opening:** Friday: 10.00 – 21.00 (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **Website** www.npg.org.uk