
AWARE

ART FASHION IDENTITY

GSK Contemporary – Aware: Art Fashion Identity 02.12.2010 – 30.01.2011

Full list of artists includes new commissions by Hussein Chalayan and Yinka Shonibare MBE

The Royal Academy of Arts presents GSK Contemporary 2010, the third season of contemporary art at 6 Burlington Gardens. **GSK Contemporary – Aware: Art Fashion Identity** focuses on how artists and a number of designers examine clothing as a mechanism to communicate and reveal elements of our identity. The exhibition contains work by 30 international contemporary practitioners including **Marina Abramović, Acconci Studio, Azra Akšamija, Maja Bajevic, Handan Börüteçene, Hussein Chalayan, Alicia Framis, Meschac Gaba, Marie-Ange Guilleminot, Andreas Gursky, Mella Jaarsma, Kimsooja, Claudia Losi, Susie MacMurray, Marcello Maloberti, La Maison Martin Margiela, Alexander McQueen, Yoko Ono, Maria Papadimitriou, Grayson Perry, Dai Rees, Katerina šedá, Cindy Sherman Hon RA, Yinka Shonibare MBE, Helen Storey, Rosemarie Trockel, Sharif Waked, Gillian Wearing RA, Yohji Yamamoto and Andrea Zittel.**

New work by **Yinka Shonibare MBE** and **Hussein Chalayan**, commissioned especially for **Aware** by London College of Fashion and the Royal Academy of Arts, is on display. **Hussein Chalayan** presents a new dress inspired by the 300 year old Japanese tradition of Bunraku puppet theatre while **Yinka Shonibare MBE** worked with bespoke tailor **Chris Stevens** on creating 18 designs, based on 19th-century children's dress, which have been assembled to form a wall mural.

Occupying the main galleries of the Royal Academy's 6 Burlington Gardens building, **Aware** is divided into four sections. **Storytelling** acknowledges the role of clothing in the representation of personal and cultural history. **Grayson Perry's** *Artist's Robe, 2004*, an elaborate, appliquéd coat made of a patchwork of luxurious fabrics, is a commentary on the figure and status of the artist in the world today.

Building covers the concept of clothing being used as a form of protection and the notion of carrying one's own shelter, referencing the nomadic, portable nature of modern life. On display is *Shelter Me 1, 2005* by **Mella Jaarsma** who parallels garment and architectural constructions in her work. **Jaarsma** defines shelter as the minimal construction needed for protection, not yet the shape of a house, but directly related to the proportions of the human body.

Belonging and Confronting examines ideas of nationality as well as displacement and political and social confrontation, recognising the tensions associated with the assimilation of new cultures and traditions. In Palestinian artist **Sharif Waked's** video installation, *Chic Point, 2003*, the contradictory interpretations of revealing flesh as a fashion prerogative or as a humiliation juxtapose two worlds, one of high fashion and the other of semi-imprisonment.

The importance of **Performance** in the presentation of fashion and clothing, and in highlighting the roles that we play in our daily life, are explored in the final section. Film footage of **Yoko Ono's** performance of *Cut Piece* at Carnegie Recital Hall, New York in 1965, for which the artist invited the public to cut strips from her clothing is featured. While the scraps of fabric fall to the floor, the unveiling of the female body suggests the total destruction of the barriers imposed by convention.

Aware reflects upon the relationship between our physical covering and constructed personal environments, our individual and social identities and the contexts in which we live. As a mechanism of expression, the exploration of the role of clothing has been at the heart of the artistic practice of a number of contemporary artists, and has particular resonance for those attuned to the social situations of their times. Whilst frequently fulfilling a practical and occasionally protective function, clothing can be effective in celebrating or suppressing identity and in indicating allegiances. It has the ability to express our way of life and even our unconscious, communicating our positions, aspirations and desires.

"The Royal Academy of Arts is delighted to be working with GlaxoSmithKline again on bringing contemporary art to Burlington Gardens. This is the first time we have held a major exhibition on how contemporary artists and designers have turned to clothing as a medium to explore issues beyond fashion such as identity, nationality, displacement and conflict."

Charles Saumarez Smith, Secretary & Chief Executive, Royal Academy of Arts

"The continued success of the partnership between GSK and the Royal Academy is testament to the creativity and innovation behind the exhibitions. As a company we are committed to transforming lives whilst balancing the demands of our employees, shareholders and the wider society in which we operate and serve. Contributing to the arts remains an integral part of this effort and we look forward to a stimulating and engaging third season of GSK Contemporary."

Katie Pinnock, Director UK Corporate Contributions, GlaxoSmithKline

London College of Fashion is a partner in the development of the project, supporting two commissions, a symposium and a series of Salon Talks which will take place in the sketch on-site café and include speakers such as **Yinka Shonibare MBE** and **Helen Storey**. The talks programme will explore themes provoked by **Aware** and is supported by Bastyan.

The concept for the exhibition was developed by the independent curator Gabi Scardi with artist Lucy Orta, and the exhibition is co-curated by Kathleen Soriano and Edith Devaney, from the Royal Academy.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated paperback catalogue, published by Damiani.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors:

- As part of its support of the Royal Academy of Arts, and its work with contemporary artists, GlaxoSmithKline are sponsoring a programme of exhibitions at the Royal Academy's galleries in 6 Burlington Gardens – GSK Contemporary.
- GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical and healthcare companies and is committed to improving the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer. In 2009, GlaxoSmithKline's community investment was £163 million and targeted health and education programmes in almost 100 countries. GlaxoSmithKline is one of the largest charitable givers in the FTSE 100 and has a long history of supporting art initiatives that encourage creative thinking. For more information please visit: www.gsk.com/community
- Following the success of last year's collaboration sketch once again hosts sketch at the RA, a pâtisserie and café on site. A menu of gourmet

dishes and drinks created by master chef Pierre Gagnaire are available throughout the run of the exhibition.

- Founded in June 2009, luxury womenswear brand Bastyan takes its name from founder and designer Tonia Bastyan who rose to prominence in the 1990s as one half of the highly successful Press & Bastyan. The Bastyan collection is available in House of Fraser UK and Brown Thomas Ireland and consists of individual pieces each designed to transcend seasons and become collectables of the future. For more information please visit: www.bastyan.co.uk

Media partner

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DATES AND OPENING HOURS

Open to public:

2 December 2010 – 30 January 2011

Closed 24, 25 and 26 December 2010

10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)

Late night openings:

Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

(31 December 2010, 10am – 6pm)

ADMISSION

£7 full price; £6 Registered Disabled and 60 + years; £5 NUS / ISIC cardholders; £4 12–18 years and Income Support; £3 8–11 years; 7 and under free. Family Ticket: £16

TICKETS

Tickets are available daily at the RA. To book tickets in advance please visit www.royalacademy.org.uk/aware or call +44 (0)844 209 0051

Groups of 10 or more are asked to book in advance; please call +44 (0)20 7300 8027, fax: +44 (0)20 7300 8084 or email: groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk

IMAGES

Publicity images for GSK Contemporary – Aware: Art Fashion Identity can be obtained from Dorothee Dines at Calum Sutton PR

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