



Dinner Party Guest 2

SMALL SCREEN LOVERS
RAE BIRCH CARTER

155A GALLERY



Dinner Party Guests, Individual monotypes, ink on paper, Image size: 36.5 x 27.5cm, Paper size: 55 x 38cm
All sizes approximate, some slight variation may occur

SMALL SCREEN LOVERS

Rae Birch Carter

A series of monotype prints, created at the Artichoke Print Workshop, as part of 'The Artichoke Print Prize' awarded at Woolwich Contemporary Art Fair 2023

Using the printing plate as a starting point, Rae adopts a spontaneous approach to mark making, applying colour, then wiping it, or washing it away, again and again, until all tangible meaning is erased and something ghostly and original emerges.

A deep, blue black is smeared around the glass, conjuring something mysterious and fundamental. Faces and figures emerge like fossils on the seabed, recalling those experiments with early photography and cyanotypes by Anna Atkins, 'rhapsodies in blue'.

In another life, Rae works as a milliner, fabricating costumes and identities for film sets. This conjuring of character seeps into her artistic practice, in which a series of non-identifiable figures appear on the printing plate and are then erased and reworked multiple times to forge new identities, impressions and versions of each other. A torn-out picture from a newspaper might act as a starting point, but by the end of the process, the figure is nebulous, a blank on which anything can be projected.

Rae is fascinated by reality TV shows, with their ever-evolving carousel of participants, and observes with empathy the human interactions of people stretched to their limits. The figures in these monotypes emerge rather like an identikit character on such a reality programme, self-fabricated to create an unrecognisable version of themselves, hiding away their true, original identity by putting on a mask. Scrape away the layers, and who is hiding underneath?

The border of each print becomes a screen, a frame, a discreet space for the figure to inhabit. These prints and their figures are timeless. Unlike the filtered, Instagram-friendly faces of the twenty-first century, these faces could be of any time or place. Some of Rae's works sit within oval frames like eighteenth century miniatures.

In the gallery setting, the prints are placed in dialogue with each other. They could be people seated around a dinner table or hung on the walls of a salon. These ghostly, impressionistic faces could be anyone and everyone: a married couple holding a conversation, or anonymous passengers in a tube train carriage.

Unlike, perhaps, the American painter, Elizabeth Peyton, who uses found images of real people as source material, to create intimate, small scale portraits of friends, celebrities or historical figures, or the London-based painter, Kaye Donachie, who paints imaginary people, based on twentieth century literary figures, Rae is influenced by Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. Drawing, especially life-drawing, is key to her practice. The faces portrayed in this series of monoprints, are oblique, pensive and fully unique.

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Alice Chasey is a writer and editor specialising in contemporary art

Rae Birch Carter is an artist whose work incorporates the human face and body within a contemporary context. Working expressively, with freedom and spontaneity, Rae works with print, paint, drawing and collage.

'Mainly working on paper, I like to reflect our screen based culture in a playful and instinctive way; often contrasting the slickness of those online spaces with the unpredictability of monotype printing and torn up collage.'

I am interested in the pressures, pleasures and the isolation that often come along with this online world that so many of us are now participants in. I'm particularly drawn to the ordinary people who have chosen to take part in reality television shows. The heightened emotional states induced in them for our entertainment; their combination of knowingness and vulnerability.

I try to visually explore the very transitory, yet intense sympathy and connection we feel whilst watching them perform in this modern gladiatorial arena.'

Rae is a self taught artist who lives and works in East London.

Shortlisted in 2022 for The Trinity Buoy Wharf drawing prize,
The ING Drawing Bursary 2022 and 2023
Selected for the Royal Watercolour Society 2023
And for Exeter Contemporary Open 2023

Awarded the New English Art Club (NEAC) Scholarship 2023
Artichoke Print Prize at Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair in 2023

Exhibition dates: 10th - 27th October 2024
155A Lordship Lane, East Dulwich, London SE22 8HX

With thanks to Colin at Artichoke Print Workshop

**For all sales enquiries, please contact Karen Smith:
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