

# KIRSTY WHITEN

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## BIOGRAPHY

Based in Fife, Kirsty Whiten's portraits of the 'imagined anthropological' recall the writing of Pliny, the mythological figures summoned up by Homer, the psychoanalytic Wolfman, and the moralist paintings of Hieronymous Bosch. In her own words, Whiten makes 'frank images of people, dealing with their psychology and socially constructed behaviour; making the viewer aware of the sexuality, control and neuroses underneath appearance [...] I aim to discomfort the viewer by presenting a character very directly and intimately'.

These are paintings that, unlike Bosch, are secular prostrations of the human animal: savage, but by no means noble, civilised but only inasmuch as it is able to repress its instinct. In short, Whiten's work unspools the surreality of human self-image. In her series *Sexyland*, the artist makes the genteel brocading of the 19th century stately home co-habit the much more beastly act of masturbation. The series is a kind of visual homage to the first chapter of Michel Foucault's seminal text *The History of Sexuality*, titled 'We Other Victorians', and, like that text, is akin to hearing a deeply repressed secret loudly broadcast on national television.

These recurring clashes are perhaps partly to explain why, as admitted in a recent interview with *The Scotsman*, Whiten is 'often unsure where she fits in'. And perhaps the liminality her works remind us of (or, better, that they revel in reminding us of, however much we might squirm), the narrow gulf between a tableau of morals, cultures, practices that

have qualified and excepted the human vs. their presumed absence in the kingdom of beasts, ought make us equally unsure of where it is we ourselves 'fit in'.

## EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

### 2019

*The Opening of the Egg*, Arusha Gallery, Edinburgh

### 2018

*ICON ORACLE*, Arusha Gallery, Edinburgh  
North East Fife Open Studios

### 2017

*Young Night Thought*, with Kirsty Law and Daniel Warren, audiovisual album project funded by Creative Scotland

*This Will Ruin Everything*, Lighthouse Design Centre, Glasgow, curated by RECOAT  
*It Works!* Curated by Dr. Ruth Peizer-Montada, Edinburgh Printmakers  
London Art Fair, Islington, London, with Arusha Gallery, Edinburgh

### 2016

*WRONGER RITES*, book project, Hardcover Artistbook, edition of 750, crowdfunded publishing

Cupar Arts festival, curatorial committee, Cupar, Fife

*LUMINAL*, Cupar Arts festival, group exhibition

*You want the Moon*, group exhibition at Arusha Gallery, Edinburgh

### 2015

SSA Annual Open Exhibition, group exhibition at National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh

RSA Open Exhibition, group exhibition at National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh

*Wronger Rites* | *The Quing of the Now People*, solo exhibition at Whitespace Gallery, Edinburgh

Leith Late Festival, mural/poster project, Edinburgh

*Cherry Tomato Pony Rider*, group exhibition at Nederlands Embassy, Paris

**2014**

*Perfect Garden/Burning Palace*, group exhibition at Schloss Damtschach, Austria  
*Wronger Rites* Mural, mural commission, Cowgate, Edinburgh

**2013**

Cupar Arts Festival, Cupar, Fife, curated by Gayle Neson by open submission  
*KARTINA ZEMBLA*, Comar, An Tobar (Tobermory) group submission curated by Sion Parkinson by open submission

**AWARDS****2016**

Grant for artist book project: *WRONGER RITES* The Quing of the Now People, Saltire Society, Edinburgh  
Space/Time mid-career artist retreat at Cove Park  
Magnetic North

**2015**

Guest artist on Auteurs residency at Cove Park, National Theatre of Scotland

**2013**

Fife Visual Arts and Crafts Awards Scheme, grant for Cupar Arts Festival public art project

**2011**

Edinburgh Printmakers co-authorship programme, 12 Handprinted limited edition stone lithographs

**2010**

Fife Visual Arts and Crafts Awards Scheme, grant for printmaking development

**2008**

Edinburgh Printmakers co-authorship programme

**2007**

Edinburgh Visual Arts and Crafts Awards Scheme, grant for sculpture development

**2006**

Alistair Salvesen Travel scholarship, *one of three shortlisted for £10000 prize at RSA*

**2004**

Edinburgh Visual Arts and Crafts Award Scheme, grant for studio towards book production

**2003**

Edinburgh Visual Arts and Crafts Award Scheme, grant for studio

**2002**

Scottish Arts Council Assistance grant, towards preparation for solo show at the Collective Gallery, Edinburgh  
SAC Professional Development Grant, towards a visit and exhibition at RMIT University, Melbourne

**2001**

Edinburgh Visual Arts and Crafts Awards Scheme, grant for studio

**COLLECTIONS****2012**

Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop, 12 Hand printed limited edition stone lithographs

**2004**

St. Andrews University, Bell Pettigrew Museum collection, commissioned series of 12 drawings from the museum collection specimens

**2000**

Portrait of Akiko, oil and varnish on board, Mayoral Office, Villach Austria

**PUBLISHING**

*WRONGER RITES The Quing of the Now People – An Artistbook of misremembered Rituals*, Hardcover with 90 pages and full colour litho-plate printing throughout, published through a Kickstarter Campaign in August 2016. Design by Zag, Glasgow.  
Available from [www.kirstywhiten.com](http://www.kirstywhiten.com)

STORIES FOR WAYS AND MEANS, hardcover book, Limited Edition Prints – stories and poems for children written by musicians with images by artists and illustrators, put together by Waxploitation Records in L.A. Original Children's Story Collaborations: Tom Waits + Joe Coleman, Frank Black + Kai and Sunny, Will Oldman + Swoon, Nick Cave + Joe Sorren, Micachu + Kirsty Whiten and many others. [www.sfwam.org](http://www.sfwam.org)