

OPEN EYE GALLERY



OPEN EYE GALLERY 13 January to 18 March 2012

MAIN EXHIBITION

RICHARD & FAMOUS: RICHARD SIMPKIN AND SIMONE LUECK Curated by Martin Parr

ARCHIVE EXHIBITION

PAINTED PHOTOGRAPHS From the collection of Martin Parr

Open Eye Gallery, one of the UK's leading photography galleries and the only venue of its kind in the North West, is excited to announce the UK premier of two exhibitions in their new gallery on the Liverpool Waterfront, from **13 January to 18 March 2012**.

UK Photographer Martin Parr curates ***Richard & Famous***, showcasing work by photographers Richard Simpkin and Simone Lueck. The exhibition features an extraordinary collection of images from the personal project of Australian photographer and star-hunter **Richard Simpkin**, examining our ever-evolving celebrity culture and raising questions about identity, social boundaries and the passage of time.

What began for Simpkin as an adolescent urge to photograph himself with celebrities developed into a lifelong project that has resulted in a vast collection of over 1,000 images, a wealth of anecdotes and a unique, multi-faceted self-portrait.

His meticulously collected images chart the fashions and faces of countless stars from the worlds of music, film, sports and politics: From Audrey Hepburn to Michael Jackson, the Dalai Lama to Nelson Mandela.

As the series progresses and Simpkin matures against a backdrop of a changing world, we get to see some of the world's most recognisable celebrities spontaneously posing, revealing something of what lies behind their highly controlled public images.

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"Richard Simpkin's work is a true revelation. Obsessively having his photo taken with the celebrities of the world, he shows them almost to be puppets in his own game of charades. Knowing how difficult it is to get access to celebrities in this day and age, it is an awesome achievement, and turns his whole game into a compelling piece of art." (Martin Parr, Guest Curator)

The exhibition also includes the work of LA-based photographer **Simone Lueck** who, for her project *The Once and Future Queens*, posted an advert on the website Craigslist, inviting older women to pose for her in the guise of their favourite film star. Each participant did her own hair, makeup and wardrobe, working closely with Lueck on the staging of her portrait.

The resulting images are haunting reflections on gender, self-image and mortality - some playful but others tinged with sadness.

Running concurrently to the main exhibition, Open Eye Gallery also presents archive exhibition **Painted Photographs** featuring celebrity photographs from the personal collection of UK photographer **Martin Parr**.

Parr has spent many years building a collection of objects relating to the popular culture of photography. Found in flea markets and second-hand shops, his 'painted photographs' are press prints and publicity shots of actors, musicians and sports stars from the post-war decades. The images have been 'painted' and edited by newspapers or magazines to improve their reproduction or indicate areas for cropping.

Exhibited for the first time, these pictures of stars such as Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, John and Yoko show us how images of celebrities were refined and manipulated in a time before Photoshop.

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Notes to Editors

Open Eye Gallery
19 Mann Island, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool L3 1BP
www.openeye.org.uk

Gallery opening times: 10.30am to 5.30pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Closed Monday.
FREE ENTRY

Image credits, left to right

- *Keanu Reeves* (1995) From *Richard & Famous 1989 – 2011* © Richard Simpkin
- *Francine in the living room* (2009) From *The Once and Future Queens* © Simone Lueck.
- *Muhammad Ali*. From the private collection of Martin Parr.

Further information:

Richard & Famous by Richard Simpkin: www.richardandfamous.com
The Once and Future Queens by Simone Lueck: www.simonelueck.com
Painted Photographs, from the private collection of Martin Parr - www.martinparr.com

About Open Eye Gallery

Open Eye Gallery has been one of the UK's leading photography spaces since 1977, and is the only gallery dedicated to photography in the North West of England. 2011 represents an exciting milestone in the history of the gallery as it moves to a brand new purpose-built home, twice the size of its former incarnation.

Located in a development on Liverpool's Waterfront, the new gallery is a stone's throw from Tate Liverpool and the Albert Dock, in the heart of the city's rich cultural quarter. Its re-launch in November 2011 reinforces Open Eye's position as one of the most significant exhibitors and collectors of photography in the UK.

Funding

Open Eye Gallery receives regular funding from Arts Council England and Liverpool City Council. The new gallery Capital Project has received generous support from several major funders along with grants from trusts and foundations, corporate support and individual donations. Major funders include Liverpool Vision / Northwest

Development Agency and the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Support has also been received from the Foyle Foundation, Rootstein Hopkins Foundation, Granada Foundation and JSF Pollitzer Charitable Settlement.

Biographies

Martin Parr, Guest Curator

Martin Parr is a photographer, editor, collector and curator who offers a critique of the modern world by expressing its ambiguities. He is widely regarded as the most successful photographer of his generation with work held in many national collections and exhibited and published around the world. He sees his practice as a form of collecting, an activity to which he is predisposed and that provides him with a model strategy for the pursuit of passionate research interests in leisure, consumption and communication.

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