

Gillian Wearing

28 March – 17 June 2012, Galleries 1, 8 & Victor Petitgas Gallery (Gallery 9)

The Whitechapel Gallery presents the first major international survey of Turner Prize-winning British artist Gillian Wearing's photographs and films which explore the public and private lives of ordinary people.

Fascinated by how people present themselves in front of the camera in fly-on-the-wall documentaries and reality TV, Gillian Wearing explores ideas of personal identity through often masking her subjects and using theatre's staging techniques.

This major exhibition surveys Wearing's work from the early photographs *Signs that Say What You Want Them to Say and Not Signs that Say What Someone Else Wants You to Say* (1992–3) to her latest video *Bully* (2010) and also includes several new photographs made specially for the Whitechapel Gallery exhibition.

Visitors to the exhibition will enter a film set-style installation showcasing photographs and films in 'front and back stage' areas. Highlights include a striking photograph of the artist posing as her younger self, *Self-Portrait at 17 Years Old* (2003), *Dancing in Peckham* (1994), a film which blurs the boundaries between public space and private expression as Wearing dances in the middle of a shopping mall, and the UK premiere of recent film *Bully* (2010). New photographic works shown for the first time include two portraits of Wearing as artists August Sander and Claude Cahun as part of her ongoing series of iconic photographers, as well as still lives of flowers, looking back to the rich symbolism of the great age of 17th century Dutch painting.

A gallery is dedicated to Wearing's well-known photographs giving people the chance to write what they were thinking at that moment, titled *Signs that Say What You Want Them to Say and Not Signs that Say What Someone Else Wants You to Say* (1992–3). The series includes a city worker holding a sign saying, 'I'm Desperate', a policeman holding 'Help!' and another person's sign 'Will Britain ever get through this recession'.

The exhibition also includes a series of private viewing booths for three confessional videos shown together for the first time and in which Gillian Wearing asked people to describe intensely personal experiences. These include *Trauma* (2000) where sitters describe childhood traumas while wearing a mask. As well as the powerful videos *Secrets and Lies* (2000) and *Confess All On Video. Don't Worry, You Will Be In Disguise. Intrigued? Call Gillian... (1994)*. Alongside these works the video *2 into 1* (1997) sees a mother lip synching the voices of her twin sons and vice versa as they describe their relationship.

Notes for Editors

- Gillian Wearing OBE was born in Birmingham, UK, in 1963. She is one of a generation of British artists that have come to international prominence today. Wearing studied art and design at Chelsea School of Art before studying Fine Art at Goldsmiths' College, University of

Press Release

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London. She has exhibited widely internationally, with solo exhibitions at institutions including Musée Rodin, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and, the Serpentine Gallery, London. She won the Turner Prize in 1997. Her first feature-length film *Self Made* (2011) was released in September 2011. She lives and works in London, with her husband artist Michael Landy.

- *Gillian Wearing* is organised by the Whitechapel Gallery and K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen; it will be touring to Düsseldorf and the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.
- Gillian Wearing is curated by Daniel Herrmann, Eisler Curator and Head of Curatorial MA Studies, and Doris Krystof, Curator, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.
- *Gillian Wearing* is accompanied by a fully illustrated book.
- *Gillian Wearing* is represented by Maureen Paley, London, Tanya Bonakdar, New York, and Regen Projects, Los Angeles.

Visitor Information

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm, Thursdays & Fridays, 11am – 9pm. Tickets: £9.50/£7.50 concs (including Gift Aid donation) £8.50/£6.50 (without Gift Aid). Book opens 4 January 2012 *:+44(0)844 412 4309*. Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. Nearest London Underground Station: Aldgate East, Liverpool Street, Tower Gateway DLR. T + 44 (0) 20 7522 7888 info@whitechapelgallery.org whitechapelgallery.org

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