

**Christen Sveaas Art Foundation:
The Travel Bureau, Selected by Paulina Olowska**

14 January – 8 May 2022

Gallery 7, Free entry

#ChristenSveaasArt

Travel to designations far and wide with 26 international artists

Painter **Paulina Olowska** (b. 1976, Poland) reimagines Whitechapel Gallery as travel bureau, where works of art by **Marina Abramović**, **Gillian Ayres**, **Ed Ruscha** and more become portals to destinations around the globe. Drawing from the Christen Sveaas Art Foundation, Olowska's installation is inspired by Orbis, the largest and longest running travel agency in Poland, famous for its alluring posters that offer prospective travelers a dream of escape.

Within the 'waiting room' of Olowska's travel bureau, visitors first encounter **Rosson Crow**'s (b. 1982, USA) epic Californian desertscape, populated with electric pink cacti and sun-bleached detritus. Before the 3-metre-wide canvas stands a wooden desk on which an ornate porcelain vase by collective **Skuja Braden** (Ingūna Skuja, b. 1965, Latvia; and Melissa D. Braden, b. 1968, USA) and a collection of vintage postcards mirror the destinations portrayed throughout the space.

Olowska's own multifaceted practice embraces painting, graphics, costume design, performance and activism. Her monumental figurative paintings celebrate modern women pictured in magazine-style poses against backdrops of utopian scenarios, including *Window Display GUM* (2018), in which a young woman poses in an idyllic green pasture clad in a luxurious summer dress.

Elsewhere in the display **Rodney Graham**'s (b. 1949, Canada) bed-bound newspaper reader imagines only the possibility of travel, while **Hurvin Anderson**'s (b. 1965, UK) painted parasols conjure scenes of white sandy beaches and the plein air paintings of **Thore Heramb** (1916-2014) and **Oluf Wold-Torne** (1867-1919) transport viewers to the Norwegian countryside. For those curious about travel beyond the Earth's atmosphere, cosmonauts Pierre et Gilles (formed 1976) reveal the neon flora of outer space.

The Travel Bureau is the second of four displays featuring works from the Christen Sveaas Art Foundation, which holds more than 2000 works by 300 artists from around the world. This exhibition features 26 of these artists including **Marina Abramović**, **Brian Alfred**, **Hurvin Anderson**, **Gillian Ayres**, **Monica Bonvicini**, **Skuja Braden**, **Rosson Crow**, **Ida Ekblad**, **Arne Ekeland**, **Berta Fischer**, **Till Gerhard**, **Rodney Graham**, **Thore Heramb**, **Paulina Olowska**, **Laura Owens**, **Pierre et Gilles**, **Johannes Rian**, **Julia Rommel**, **Ed Ruscha**, **Caragh Thuring**, **Fredrik Værselev**, **Charline Von Heyl**, **Jakob Weidemann** and **Oluf Wold-Torne**.

Olowska's display follows *This is the Night Mail*, selected by Oslo-based artist **Ida Ekblad** (b. 1980, Norway). The third and fourth exhibitions in the series feature

Press Release

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the selections of **Hurvin Anderson** and **Donna Huanca** (b. 1980, USA), coming to Whitechapel Gallery in summer and autumn 2022.

Notes to Editors

- *Christen Sveaas Art Foundation: The Travel Bureau, Selected by Paulina Olowska* runs from 14 January – 8 May 2022.
- The exhibition is curated in consultation with Paulina Olowska by Iwona Blazwick, Director, Whitechapel Gallery and Grace Storey, Assistant Curator, Whitechapel Gallery.
- The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated publication designed by Mark El-khatib, including an interview with Paulina Olowska.
- The display is generously supported by the Norwegian Embassy and the Polish Cultural Institute London.

About Whitechapel Gallery

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Frida Kahlo and Hannah Höch to contemporaries such as Zarina Bhimji, Sophie Calle, William Kentridge, Eduardo Paolozzi and Michael Rakowitz. Its historic campus houses exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, talks and film screenings, the Townsend dining room and the Koenig Bookshop. It is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.

About Christen Sveaas

Christen Sveaas is a Norwegian businessman, collector and philanthropist who has collected art and antique silver for more than 40 years. He began his art collection with late 19th century and early 20th century Norwegian artists including Johan Christian Dahl, Edvard Munch and Harald Sohlberg. In the early 1990s he was introduced to the work of Howard Hodgkin which inspired him to start collecting international contemporary artists. The collection's focus is primarily painting with some sculpture and photography and is made up of more than 2000 works of art by over 300 artists. In 1996 Christen Sveaas founded the Kistefos Museum on the grounds of his grandfather Anders Sveaas' old wood pulp mill at Jevnaker, north of Oslo. The wood pulp mill was active from 1889 until 1955 but is still intact. The museum has one of the most important sculpture parks in Europe, an industrial museum and two exhibition spaces for contemporary art. The museum building, The Twist, which straddles the river that divides the park was designed by BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group architects, opened in 2019. The same year, Christen Sveaas established the Christen Sveaas Art Foundation which the following year received some 800 works of art from his personal collection to be made available to Kistefos as well as other Norwegian and international museums.

About Paulina Olowska

Paulina Olowska (b.1976, Poland) lives and works in Rabka-Zdroj in Poland. Like the 20th century European avant-gardes, she embraces all aspects of the arts from painting to graphics, fashion, stage and costume design, performance and activism; she even co-founded and designed an artist's bar. Her monumental figurative paintings often feature modern women in magazine style poses against backdrops of utopian scenarios. 'I like to use fashion in artworks as a tool to speak about past ideologies and allude to different movements and moments in history.' Solo exhibitions include Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway (2022); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (2021); Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw (2021); Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2014); Kunsthalle Basel (2013). Olowska presented the ballet 'Slavic Goddesses—A Wreath of Ceremonies' at the Kitchen, New York, in 2017 and 'Slavic Goddesses and The Ushers' at the Museo del Novecento in Milan in 2018. She has also staged performances at Tate Modern (2015), the Carnegie International (2013), and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013). Olowska's work was featured in the 2017 National Gallery of Victoria Triennial in Melbourne, Australia and the 2018 Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, UK.

Visitor Information

Gallery Admission: Free

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; First Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

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