



## **ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF THREE NEW ROYAL ACADEMICIANS**

At a recent General Assembly meeting, the Royal Academy of Arts elected three new Royal Academicians: **Brian Griffiths** and **Shirazeh Houshiary**, in the category of Sculpture, and **Clare Woods**, in the category of Painting.

### **Brian Griffiths, RA Elect** (Category of Membership: Sculpture)

Since graduating from Goldsmiths College in the late 1990s Brian Griffiths has been making sculptures and installations full of overblown theatricality and pathos.

Griffiths attempts to think with things, and considers how things think. Collected objects become rich material to be laid out, directed and persuaded to perform. He has made exhibitions with Bill Murray, invisible entities and wood.

Griffiths' exhibitions privilege imperfect descriptions and freewheeling associations, and positions material facts with competing interwoven fictions. They approach visual languages and styles like fancy dress, to be enjoyed and changed frequently. As a recent show title raps out '*No No to Knock-Knocks*' – a warning (to self and others) about falling into fixed routines, fixed thinking.

Significant solo exhibitions and commissions include: Camden Arts Centre, London; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK; Tramway, Glasgow; Art on the Underground, London; Fundament Foundation, Tilburg, Netherlands; Arnolfini, Bristol, UK; The Saatchi Gallery, London; City Racing, London.

Over the last two decades he has exhibited in numerous institutions including: Tate, UK; CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux; The Groninger Museum, Netherlands; Museu de Arte de Belém, Brazil; Barbican Centre, London; Hayward Gallery, London; Jeu De Paume Museum, Paris; The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, USA; Mostra D'Arte Contemporanea Milan; Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Royal Academy of Arts, London; The Fruitmarket, Edinburgh.

In 2011 *Crummy Love*, Griffiths' first monograph was published by Walther König. Brian Griffiths is a Senior Lecturer at the Royal Academy Schools.

### **Shirazeh Houshiary, RA Elect** (Category of Membership: Sculpture)

Since rising to prominence as a sculptor in the 1980s, Shirazeh Houshiary's practice also encompasses painting, installation, architectural projects and film.

Houshiary investigates the friction between the conscious and unconscious, control and chance, reflecting on the physical and immaterial qualities that shape art and human life. Veils, membranes and mists are leitmotifs in her work that tries to visualise modes of perception.

Houshiary finds succour in the transformation of material: two words, one an affirmation, the other a denial, are pencil-stroked onto canvas so lightly, and clouded over by finely wrought skeins of pigment, that they morph in front of the naked eye. So too, aluminium armatures and glass elliptical brick towers, charged with dynamic tension, appear different from every angle, as if negating their own presence.

Shirazeh Houshiary was born in Shiraz, Iran in 1955 and moved to London in 1974. She studied at Chelsea School of Art 1979 and lives and works in London. She was awarded the title Professor at the London Institute and was short listed for Turner Prize at the Tate Gallery in 1994. She was given Asia Arts Game Changer Award Hong Kong 2018. Recent publications include: *Artists and the Rothko Chapel: 50 Years of Inspiration* published by Moody Center for the Arts 2020; *The slowdown 'At a Distance': 100 visionaries at home in a pandemic*, published by apartamento and *A Thousand Folds* published by Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul.

Major Projects and commission include: Rice Public Art, Moody Center for Arts Houston; East Window, St Martin-in-the-Fields London; Sydney Biennale, Australia; Kiev Biennale, Ukraine; Camden Arts Centre, London; Magasin-Centre National d'Art Contemporain Grenoble; Musee Rath, Switzerland; 'Breath' Torre di Porta Nuova 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale; Tate Liverpool; Villa Stuck Munich; Bonnefanten Museum Maastricht; Hochschule Fur Angewandte Kunst Vienna; International Biennale of Contemporary Art Cartagena Colombia; Skulptur Projekte Munster; Sonsbeek, International sculpture exhibition Arnhem; Les Magiciens de la Terre, Centre Pompidou, Paris and Negotiating Rapture, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

[Clare Woods, RA Elect](#) (Category of Membership: Painting)

Clare Woods was born in Southampton in 1972. She received a BA in Fine Art Sculpture from Bath School of Art in 1994 and an MA in Fine Art from Goldsmith's College in 1999. She lives and works in Hereford.

Woods' distinctive style is informed by her background in sculpture; large, gestural brushstrokes are used to sculpt objects within the pictorial plane. Woods' still life and figurative paintings are unmistakably rooted in real space and time, but abstracted by bold, fluid marks upon the aluminium surface. It is through the materiality of paint that a simultaneous de/re construction of form, obscuring that which seems immediately discernible.

In much of her previous work, Woods' concern with landscape has been paramount. However, since 2011 her images have been increasingly preoccupied with conveying the human form. Much of Woods' recent work is concerned with fragility, vulnerability, mortality and disability; the delicate border that exists between sickness and health, cruelty and humanity, and ultimately life and death. Despite the varying degrees of brightly coloured abstraction and compositional distortions, Woods' anthropomorphic studies bring to mind heads, limbs and torsos. It is like seeing the body through a distorted lens, defamiliarising and estranging it.

Woods has had many solo exhibitions both in Britain and international locations including Copenhagen, Berlin, Dallas, New York, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Athens, Madrid, Prague, and Art Basel in Switzerland. She is currently represented by Simon Lee Gallery in London and Hong Kong, Martin Asbæk Gallery in Copenhagen, Buchmann Gallery in Berlin and Night Gallery in LA.

Her work is found in many major public collections including Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, US; Arken Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; Arts Council Collection, London, UK; Government Art Collection, London, UK; Southampton City Art Gallery, UK; Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle, UK; The National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, Wales; The Towner, Eastbourne and The Hepworth Wakefield, UK.

### **About the Royal Academy of Arts**

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate. [Royalacademy.org.uk](http://Royalacademy.org.uk)

The Royal Academy is an independent charity. It does not receive revenue funding from the government so is reliant upon the support of its visitors, donors, sponsors, patrons and loyal Friends.

The Royal Academy of Arts is governed by up to 100 Royal Academicians who are all practising artists or architects. On reaching the age of 75 they become Senior Academicians thus initiating vacancies for new Members. Elections are held at regular meetings of the General Assembly, when new Members are voted in by existing RAs. Royal Academicians can elect artists from outside the UK as Honorary RAs.

**For public information, please print: 020 7300 8090 or [www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)  
Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BD**

**For further press information, please contact Johanna Bennett on 020 7300 5615 or [press.office@royalacademy.org.uk](mailto:press.office@royalacademy.org.uk)**

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