



breastfeed

Leanne Pearce

1 March – 1 April

An exhibition of paintings +
Accompanying Programme

Curated by

Adriana Cerne

Leanne Pearce looks at breastfeeding both from a personal and professional standpoint. Guided by her own experience of being a mother of two

daughters, the artist engages with the subject of maternity and its relation to contemporary society. The image of a mother feeding her child has many historical references, one of the most famous being the religious iconographic representation of the Madonna and Child. Yet, public breastfeeding appears to remain a controversy in the modern world. The increasing interest in this subject matter stems from the contrast between female power and vulnerability, the intimacy of the moment, the challenge of motherhood and the male gaze that tends to sexualise female breasts. Through her paintings, Pearce aims to portray this precious maternal bond in flesh and to reshape our perception of breastfeeding. She depicts herself with her children and other mothers with their babies in the moment that makes them equally strong and fragile. Ultimately, Pearce embodies both the complexity and lightness of being a mother and an artist at the same time.

Breastfeeding – An Urgent Topic in Contemporary Society

To complement Pearce's series of work, Leyden Gallery is hosting a series of gallery talks, performances, and panel discussions running throughout the course of the exhibition during March and on International Women's Day. These events are referred to as 'feeds' that openly lean towards a feminist undertaking with guests/panellists who will address breastfeeding as a subject pertinent to this moment; one that opens the world of discussion and larger debate. With the public opinion generally divided, either being overprotective or critical of this act, many seem to forget the functional, maternal value of breastfeeding. As the focus is shifted toward the negative stories that approach breastfeeding from a judgemental point of view, there is a need to create a counterbalance and understand what it means to be a breastfeeding mother in the 21st century. Join the conversation

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Timeline

Leanne Pearce's paintings will be on view at Leyden Gallery from 1st March until 1st April.

Feed 1: 28th February Private View 6.30 - 9pm

Feed 2: 2nd March 'Desperate Artwives' gallery takeover on Whitechapel Gallery First Thursdays 6.30 - 9.30pm (bar open late) there will be a series of performances on duration

Feed 3: 8th March International Woman's Day discussion: Leanne Pearce artist in conversation with Anna McNay, Freelance Art Writer Deputy Editor, State Magazine 6.30 – 8.30pm

Feed 4 11th March - panel discussion: *Breastfeeding in art | the artist as mother* (time tbc)

Feed 5: 17th March Sybarite Nights Music/performance/cabaret 8 – 11pm

Feed 6: 25th March performance/screening (time tbc)

Feed 7: 1st April - Finissage party 6.30 – 9pm

About the artist:

Leanne Pearce has specialised in portraiture since 2000, over which time she has developed a fresh and dynamic approach to capturing the likeness and character of the sitter.

Since successfully completing her first degree in fine art at Northumbria University in the North-East, Leanne has been commissioned to paint many faces, some of which appear regularly in the public arena. She gained a place in the semi-finals of the ITV show *A Brush with Fame* in which she painted a whole host of celebrities including Tanni Grey-Thompson and Paul Nicholas.

Leanne broadened her artistic horizons some ten years ago when she undertook a second degree in Graphic Communications. This enabled her to gain a novel perspective of her work which has influenced her artistic direction.

Recently starting a family of her own, Leanne has plunged herself headlong into the all-consuming, compelling and exceptionally lively world of babies and children. This testing environment has served as an inspiration for her work and has driven her to further develop and enhance her style. The artist's portraits reflect the colourful character and beaming energy that emanate from each of her subjects. The work is large scale, simple, vibrant and fresh.

Leyden Gallery:

Leyden Gallery is fast building a distinct reputation as a vibrant and forward-thinking gallery that shows work by both new and established artists. With previous shows featuring Paula Rego, Antony Micallef, Henry Moore, and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham. Leyden Gallery has also had work, which was commissioned by them for their inaugural exhibition *Fabricate*, on show at the Tate Gallery in April 2014 – *Fournier Street* by Sue Clayton. A recent Christine Taylor Patten exhibition (*micro/macro* March 2015) was co-curated with the esteemed feminist art historian Griselda Pollock – following which, Patten's drawings went on to show

at the Istanbul Biennial 2015. Leyden Gallery has an exciting programme of solo shows, strongly supporting the work of emerging and mid-career women artists, including that of Sarah Muirhead (*Bonded*, June - July 2015), Hilary Ellis (*Pale Significance*, Aug-Sept 2015) and Vivienne Koorland (*Soft Heart*, Nov 2016), whose work is currently on show at the Edinburgh Fruitmarket Gallery, jointly with William Kentridge.

Now in its fourth year Leyden Gallery is in an exciting and ascendant period, it is also steadily building relationships with a select group of artists – They are also gaining a reputation for their Platform for Emerging Arts programme, one of their preferred approaches of seeking out new talent with artists and are building this through the mentorship & support offered to the emerging artists they work with.

For further information and images please contact the press office on info@leydengallery.com



Bobu and Sonny

A special signed limited edition print of 30 will be available to order during the exhibition.

Gicleé print on Hahnemuhle German etching paper (310gsm) 42 x 59.4cm