

# Press Release

December 2004

## **Soles exposed: 21 women in their favourite shoes**

11 - 25 January 2005, Adam Street Gallery, London W1

'**Soles exposed**', a new show featuring paintings of 21 women in their favourite shoes, by artist and designer **Kelly Sant** opens this January at the **Adam Street Gallery**, London W1. Kelly has painted the feet of some of the leading lights of the design and fashion worlds, each clad in their favourite shoes. From design curators, to stylists, to the muse of a '70s shoe designer, each has chosen the shoes that they feel best sum them up. Essentially these are portraits of feet, some defiant, some coy, some strident, some sexual: each painting richly conveys the essence and personality of their owner. Yet each portrait ends at calf level, tantalising the viewer with suggestions of what is not revealed.

In creating each painting, **Kelly** begins with a photo shoot where, often aided with a good bottle of red, Kelly and her sitter decide the shoes (some find it hard to choose just one pair), and the pose (sitting or standing?) She then takes a series of photos and together they decide on just the right shot, the one they feel best captures the personality of the sitter. Kelly explains, "*It's strange, with some people it's the first shot we took - others take longer. It's an intuitive process finding a shoe portrait which best conveys the personality. It's a collaborative process and usually involves a lot of talk about shoes and about 10% photography*". Kelly then bases an artwork on the photo (sometimes two or three photos), and the composition is arranged through digital enhancement - then she will introduce acid color backgrounds, sometimes lengthening calves or toes, and, in one case, even creating a pair of fantasy shoes. Ultimately, the portraits aim to capture the essence of the sitter rather than stark reality.

'**Soles exposed**' has involved a cross-section of women of all ages. Some are renowned for their work in fashion, others simply fans of good design, and all very vocal in their love of shoes. Some portraits feature individuals closely involved in the world of footwear. **Liz de Havilland**, love and muse to **Terry de Havilland**, shoe extraordinaire, modelled some of her husband's bespoke designs featuring her own hand-printed and adorned fabrics. One of the new generation of shoe designers, **Georgina Goodman**, is seen in a pair of moulded leather hand stitched slingbacks from her own collection: "*These are the first pair of shoes that I made for myself. They are really worn and loved out, they've been through rain storms, clipped along snowy streets, and loved for the way they turn up at the end like a pair of jester shoes*".

Naturally, any exhibition of shoe portraits will touch on the fetishistic aspect of shoe design and '**Soles Exposed**' is no exception. For her portrait, fashion and design journalist **Ashlee Moratorio** chose her favourite Manolos; "*On their first outing they immediately commanded attention. Within an hour of wearing them I had a man drooling over the shoes. As he asked me to join him for coffee, all the time staring at the shoes, he said, 'So, do you always wear shoes like that?'*" **Kate Blythe**, fashion features writer at Elle, was more conscious of the effect her Manolo's have; after all, "*who wouldn't follow these home?*" And architectural designer **Shona Kitchen** was certainly aware of the alluring nature of her favourite shoes by Ferragamo, asserting they are "*shoes specifically bought to make love to in*".

Some love their shoes simply because they make them feel great. According to **Jodi Mullen**, assistant to **Tord Boontje**, "*These saucy numbers were bought from a second hand shop in Covent Garden and I love them 'cos when I put them on they make my boobs feel bigger!*" **Juliet Blaker**, who loves dance, adores the effect her pink pumps have on her: "*Thinking ballet, thinking dance, thinking mood.....in the pink*".

'**Soles exposed: 21 women in their favourite shoes**' runs **January 11 – 29, 2005** at **Adam Street Gallery**, 9 Adam Street, WC2N 6AA, t. 020 7379 8000 or email [events@adamstreet.co.uk](mailto:events@adamstreet.co.uk)

For further information and images of '**Soles exposed**', please contact Kati Price at [katiprice@hotmail.com](mailto:katiprice@hotmail.com) or call 07958 282 059

### **Notes to Editors**

Kelly graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2001 with an MA in Design Products. There she met her partner Arash Kaynama with whom she now collaborates on collections of one off visual artworks to ranges of mass produced items. From their studio near Wandsworth Bridge, Arash and Kelly create things that re-interpret the message, significance and function of objects in their use of materials and the processes of making. Their products can be found in design boutiques across the country including Thorsten van Elten (Warren Street), Key London (Wimpole Street), Geoffrey Drayton (Hampstead Rd) and Back to my Place (Cardiff). Two pieces of furniture by Kelly and Arash will be featured in 'SIT? A Show of Contemporary Seating', a forthcoming exhibition at the Geffrey Museum in February 2005.

For more information on Kelly Sant's work, please visit [www.arashandkelly.co.uk](http://www.arashandkelly.co.uk) or contact Kelly Sant at [Kelly@arashandkelly.co.uk](mailto:Kelly@arashandkelly.co.uk)