

off the wall gallery

paintings · sculpture · original prints

RUSSELL YOUNG – Photography and Mixed Media



BIOGRAPHY

Russell Young was born in 1959 in Yorkshire, where he was immediately put into a foster home, then a nunnery, and was adopted before reaching the age of one. No one knew exactly his birth parents, though there were rumors his mother was fourteen and his father was from Italy. In Northern England, he spent much of his time moving from town to town and living an isolating existence. Here he would take his first photographs of birds on the lawn, only for the film to come back developed so dark he could hardly make out the birds. Like these first photographs, Young's life developed with areas blotted by abandonment. The lack of a personal or even a shared history has left him free to explore dreams and fantasies of sometimes better, sometimes harsher worlds. That yearning has resulted in a body of work that is an uncompromising, intimate love letter addressed to these vast reaches, which, with every passing inscription, are revealed to be rich, wild frontiers. With few prospects other than working in the factory towns, Young lied about his age to attend art college at the age of fifteen. Had he not done so, he would have most likely moved to the streets of London and died. He moved to the capital five years later and caught the attention of photographer Christos Raftopoulos, whom he assisted for several years. Raftopoulos introduced Young to another side of himself, building him his own darkroom, taking him to the opera, and showing him the limits of his life did not need to confine him or his work. It was during this time—still rough in nature and occasionally homeless—he photographed the early gigs of Bauhaus, R.E.M., and The Smiths. His innate eye for movement landed him photoshoots for magazines and, eventually, his first record sleeve cover for the 1987 album *Faith* by George Michael. Young continued to photograph celebrities and direct music videos, eventually leading him to the United States. The rock star aesthetic he had brandished in his photography lent itself to his earliest screen prints that followed in the 2000s. His first series, *Pig Portraits*, shown in Los Angeles in 2003, collected the infamous mugshots (real and staged) of celebrities awash in fame and monochrome but also restrained as a result of their actions. In his following series, *Dirty Pretty Things*, he began to incorporate his popular use of diamond dust. The glam shots of cultural icons glittering in pulverized diamonds embodied the lusts and aspirations of their eras.

In the summer of 2009, Young went to the Greek island of Ithaca. Raftopoulos, who owned a home there, invited him to stay. The island served as a refuge. It led Young, who left behind his past and the expectations of his work on the shores of the mainland, to reclaim the feeling of isolation that had hounded him all his life. There, amongst ancient olive groves, he drenched himself in goat's blood procured from a local butcher and pressed his body against the linen. It was an outrageous performance meant for no one but himself. Like a blasphemous reimagining of the Turin Shroud, this feral and highly personal act marked a seminal turn. It began what would become an ongoing and visceral conversation between his body, memory, and the natural world. That conversation, however, was abruptly cut short the following year when Young contracted the H1N1 virus that put him into a coma for over a week. He nearly died. When he regained consciousness, he had to relearn to read and write, and he had forgotten the color green. When one of his children brought him a book of animals, he could hardly believe polar bears actually existed on our planet. What has followed from Young's illness is the maturing of that conversation and a preoccupation with a central dilemma: the exact edge where a boy-like wonder falls into violent truth. In his first series of paintings after surviving his illness, Young pressed canvases down into pools of red shellac, letting the resin drip, smear, and splatter like wounds. In *Helter Skelter*, he repeatedly screen-printed images taken from the Rolling Stones Altamont Free Concert to the point of abstraction, echoing the infernal, disorienting frenzy that ended in the death of Meredith Hunter and the era of free love altogether. The counterculture of Young's youth, once a source of inspiration, was now also a source of trauma. In his wake, he even left behind his own boot prints. A year later, in his series *Only Anarchists are Pretty*, he cut out pornographic images of bound women and arranged them like the brutal machinations of a mechanic lining the walls of his garage with pinups. These crowded arrangements were given the names of the council estates he remembered in Northern England, places like Thorn Tree and The Lache, which had once threatened to overcrowd and entrap him. Young's ongoing series, *WEST*, perforates these claustrophobic visions for wider expanses. *WEST* taps into our most primal instincts and also our most grandiose dreams. The series features imagery, references, and obsessions of Young's own world built within the larger framework of the American drama. The spaghetti westerns he watched in his youth, NASCAR racers before they were safely regulated, California girls, 70s big wave Hawaiian surf photography, California girls, Hells Angels, nickel-plated revolvers, bison, rodeos, the Marlboro Cowboy before he was commercialized into oblivion, Native American chiefs before they, too, were almost driven into oblivion—they all debut in Young's quest to confront and interrogate the idealization of the American Southwest. The breadth of this ever-expanding series is matched only by Young's impulse to venture into America's deserts, forests, and oceans to go as far west as possible. Young lives and works on a Southern California beach at the edge of America. Once, when his mother visited, lounging near the pool beneath the imported palms, beyond them a view verging on the sublime, she remarked none of it was real. Young frequently leaves this "paradise that isn't real" behind and roughs it out in the wild. He might spend days out, sleeping under the freeway, swimming into the ocean to see the moon rise, ignoring evacuation orders, and watching as wildfires lick the walls of his home. He returns with industrial-grade felt from railroad tracks or giant pieces of charcoal washed ashore from other fires in order to experiment with them in the retrofitted airplane

hangar he uses as a studio. He revels in the diesel-like smell of oil and enamel that reminds him of the London Underground. He drenches his work with salt water to see it rust. He exerts himself so physically, rending anything that is not real, to lay himself bare.

Recently, Young has begun to share his newest work that similarly draws from his childhood but also from a quieter strain of his usual endeavors. The screen prints of one series, set in a melancholy blue, depict turn-of-the-century photographs of animals that, if not already, will soon be extinct. In another, he enlarges paintings of Dutch Golden Age flowers to highlight the impossibilities of their unseasonal arrangements and their hidden messages. Both the animals and the flowers are evocative of an earlier Young when he was awestruck by things that seemed out of reach and would do anything to grasp their truth. He is interested in secrets, those we keep, those we share, and those we are unwilling to confront. Upon a closer look, a rose petal might be riddled with holes. It is these holes Young's work illuminates. The holes of trauma, of carnal desire, of memory and history. Through them, he allows us to see vistas. In these vistas, there are no expectations, no rules. He roams wherever he wishes, always looking for a space to be free, experiment, and examine life and death. They are lands from which he resurrects dead dreams and crafts alternative ones. They are lands where invented realities are spun out of an earnest hope to reimagine both himself and ourselves. Russell Young's works have crossed the auction block at all of the world's major auction houses, including Sotheby's, Christie's, and Phillips.

EDUCATION

Chester Art College
Exeter College of Art and Design

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

2019 Art Couture: The Intersection of Art and Fashion, Cornell Art Museum, Florida
2018 Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow
2018 Superstar, Modern Art Museum, Shanghai
2015 Forever Young: A Retrospective, Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland, Florida
2012 A Retrospective, Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas, Texas

SOLO GALLERY SHOWS

2020 Fame, Halcyon Gallery, London
2020 ICONS, Halcyon Gallery at Harrod's, London
2020 Heroes and Heroines, Galerie Kronsbien, Munich
2019 Heroes and Heroines, Taglialatella Galleries, Toronto
2019 A Midsummer Night's Dream, Art Angels, Los Angeles
2018 Grenades, Art Angels, Los Angeles
2018 Diamond Dust, Art Angels, Los Angeles
2018 Lotusland, Ganna Walska Lotusland, Montecito

2018 Diamond Dust, Tagliatella Gallery, Paris
2018 Russell Young Pop Art, 212 Gallery, Aspen
2018 Diamond Dust, Art Angels, Los Angeles
2018 New York Grenades, Tagliatella Gallery, New York
2017 Neo Pop, Vertes Modern, Zurich
2017 Diamond Dust, Art Miami, ZK Gallery, San Francisco
2017 20th Century Icons, ZK Gallery, San Francisco
2017 Femme Fatale, Art Angels, Los Angeles
2017 Femme Fatale, Tagliatella Gallery, New York
2016 American Landscapes, Heather James Fine Art, Palm Desert
2016 SUPERSTAR, Halcyon Gallery, London
2015 Wanted Dead or Alive, 212 Gallery, Aspen
2015 Jackie O, Tagliatella Gallery, New York
2015 Rock-n-Roll Works on Paper, Long-Sharp Gallery, Indianapolis
2015 YOUNG, Galerie Burkhard Eikermann, Düsseldorf
2015 YOUNG, Galerie Hafenrichter, Nürnberg
2014 SUPERSTAR, Long-Sharp Gallery, Indianapolis
2014 Spring Show 2014, Mead Carney Fine Art, London
2014 Wild at Heart, Imitate Modern, London
2013 Dreamland, Bankrobber, London
2013 The Fight of the Paso Del Mar, Bankrobber, London
2013 Kate Moss, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2013 Suicide, Bankrobber, London
2013 Suicide, Galerie G. Hartinger Fine Arts, Vienna
2013 Suicide, Vertes Modern Art, Zurich
2012 Russell Young, Vertes Modern Art, Zurich
2012 Entertainment for Men, the Playboy Club, London
2012 Only Anarchists are Pretty, Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas
2012 A Working Class Hero is Something To Be, Long-Sharp Gallery, Indianapolis
2012 The Last Picture Show, Galerie G. Hartinger Fine Arts, Vienna
2012 The Last Picture Show, Long-Sharp Gallery, Indianapolis
2011 American Envy III, Long-Sharp/Curis Modern + Contemporary, Detroit
2011 American Envy I, Scream Gallery, London
2011 Diamond Dust, Galerie G. Hartinger Fine Arts, Vienna
2011 Icons, Galerie de Bellefeuille, Montreal
2010 Russell Young, Tagliatella Gallery, Paris
2010 Icons & Iconoclasts, Karl Hutter Fine Art, Beverly Hills
2010 Russell Young, Robinsons Art Gallery, Flanders
2010 Diamond Dust, Russeck Gallery, San Francisco
2010 Dirty Pretty Things, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2010 Dirty Pretty Things, Scream Gallery, London
2010 Dirty Pretty Things, Tagliatella Gallery, Palm Beach
2010 Selected Works, Karl Hutter Fine Art, Beverly Hills

2010 Fame+Shame, Aberson Exhibits, Tulsa, OK
2010 Russell Young, Doyle Devere, London
2009 Dirty Pretty Tings, Valentino, New York
2009 Dirty Pretty Tings, Russeck Gallery, San Francisco
2009 Dirty Pretty Things, Nikolai Rukaj Gallery, Toronto
2009 The Last Picture Show, Sims Reed Gallery, London
2008 Russell Young, Karl Hutter Fine Art, Beverly Hills,
2008 Rebel Rebel, Art of Elysium at Milk Gallery, New York
2008 Russell Young, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2008 Punk+Graffiti, Milk Gallery, New York
2007 Russell Young, Altermann Modern, San Francisco
2007 Horsepower, Milk Gallery, New York
2007 Works on Paper, Sims Reed Gallery, New York
2007 Storm, Vanina Holasek Gallery, New York
2007 Fame+Shame, Bankrobber, London
2007 Fame+Shame, Bankrobber, Los Angeles
2007 Fame+Shame, Galerie Adler, Paris
2006 White Rabbit, Te Art of Elysium, Beverly Hills,
2006 Russell Young, Sims Reed Gallery, London
2005 Fame+Shame, Vanina Holasek Gallery, New York
2005 Fame+Shame, The Art of Elysium, Los Angeles
2003 Pig Portraits, SP Gallery, London
2003 Pig Portraits, The Art Of Elysium at Don O'Melveney Gallery, Los Angeles

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015 POP, Halcyon Gallery, London
2015 The British Are Coming, Long-Sharp Gallery, Indianapolis, Indiana
2015 Pelé: Art, Life, Football, Halcyon Gallery, London
2015 Heroes and Villains, Halcyon Gallery, London
2014 Lost Angels, Mead Carney Fine Art, London
2014 POP-FICTION, 212 Gallery, London
2014 Giant, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2014 The Shock of the New, Mead Carney Fine Art, Porto Montenegro
2014 Marilyn, Tagliatella Gallery, Paris
2014 Kunst, Vertes Modern, Zurich
2014 Grafx 14, Vertes Modern, Zurich
2013 Rethinking the American Dream, Long-Sharp Gallery, Indianapolis, Indiana
2013 Works on Paper, Te Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
2013 David Bowie, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
2013 Icons and Irony, Long-Sharp Gallery, Indianapolis, Indiana
2013 Rock, Tagliatella Gallery, Paris
2013 The Art of Elysium, Los Angeles, California

2012 The Rolling Stones: 50 Years of Rocking the Art World, the Broome Street Gallery, New York and Symbolic, London
2012 The Image is One Ting, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2012 Summer Exhibition, Scream Gallery, London
2012 Marilyn, Tagliatella Gallery, Paris
2011 POP and Contemporary American Art, Tagliatella Gallery, Paris
2011 New York, Tagliatella Gallery, Paris
2011 Arts for a Better World, Tagliatella Gallery, Miami
2011 It's A Wonderful Life, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2011 Pop Pop, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2011 Scream Now, Scream Gallery, London
2011 Hueless, Mallick Williams Gallery, New York
2011 Works on Paper, Whisper Fine Art, London
2011 Heaven Gala, The Art of Elysium, Los Angeles, California
2011 Printer Proofs, Bertrand Delacroix Gallery, New York
2010 Diamonds Are Forever, Scream Gallery, London
2010 The Art of Giving, The Saatchi Gallery London
2009 Christmas Show, Scream Gallery, London
2009 Urban Legends, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2009 Pop, Liberty, The Sims Reed Gallery at Liberty of London
2009 Works on Paper, Sims Reed Gallery, New York
2008 Ink, Sims Reed Gallery, Miami
2008 ICONS, 108 Fine Art, Harrogate, Yorkshire
2007 Pop!, Collectors Contemporary, Singapore
2007 Giddy Up, Newzones Gallery, Calgary
2007 Eros, Galerie Adler, Paris
2007 Modern Master Prints, Sims Reed Gallery, London
2007 Works on Paper, Sims Reed Gallery, New York
2006 Aid for Aids, Windemere Gallery, Los Angeles
2006 Who's Tat Girl, Vanina Holasek Gallery, New York
2006 Boilermaker, Stellan Holm Gallery, New York
2006 Modern Master Prints, Sims Reed Gallery, London
2006 Beast and the Beauty, Vanina Holasek Gallery, New York
2005 Outlaws, Vanina Holasek Gallery, New York
2001 Art Heals, Twin Towers Orphan Fund, New Museum of Art and Technology

ART FAIRS

2019 Art Miami, Miami
2019 SCOPE, Miami
2019 CONTEXT Art Miami, Miami
2019 Toronto Art Fair, Toronto
2019 Hampton's Art Fair, New York
2019 Texas Contemporary, Houston
2018 Palm Beach Art Fair, Palm Beach
2018 Art Miami, Miami
2018 Reveal Art Fair, Saratoga
2017 Art Miami, Miami
2017 SCOPE, Miami
2016 Art Miami, Miami
2016 SCOPE, Miami
2015 SCOPE Miami, Florida
2015 Masterpiece, London
2015 Art Miami New York
2015 Spring Masters New York
2014 SCOPE Miami, Florida
2014 CONTEXT Art Miami, Florida
2014 Art Southampton, New York
2014 Masterpiece, London
2014 Art Monaco
2014 Art Wynwood, Miami, Florida
2013 Masterpiece, London
2013 Art Basel, Switzerland
2012 Art Basel Miami, Florida
2012 Art KYIV Contemporary, Kiev, Ukraine
2012 The San Francisco Fine Art Fair, California
2011 SCOPE Miami, Florida
2011 Art Toronto, Canada
2011 Moniker Art Fair, London
2011 LA Art Show, Los Angeles, California
2011 Art Stage Singapore
2010 Art Basel Miami, Florida
2010 Art Chicago, Illinois
2009 Fountain Art Fair, Miami
2009 The London Original Print Fair, The Royal Academy of Arts, London 2009 Cologne Art Fair, Germany
2008 SCOPE Miami, Florida
2007 Art Basel Miami, Florida
2007 SCOPE Basel, Switzerland 2006 Art Basel Miami, Florida

COLLECTIONS

Albertina Museum, Vienna
Carlo Ancelotti, Madrid
Jennifer Aniston, Los Angeles
Kate Beckinsale, Los Angeles
The Benetton Foundation, Treviso, Italy
David Bowie, New York
The Core Club, New York
Cornell Art Museum, Florida
Beth DeWoody, New York
Drake, Hidden Hills, California
Kirsten Dunst, Los Angeles
The Getty Collection, Los Angeles
Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas
Laurence Graff, New York
David Hockney, Los Angeles
Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul
Marc Jacobs, New York
Kris Jenner, Los Angeles
Angelina Jolie, Los Angeles
Khloe Kardashian, Los Angeles
Floyd Mayweather, Las Vegas
The Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina
Mohammed VI of Morocco, Rabat
The Estate of Marilyn Monroe, New York
Kate Moss, London
Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow
Elon Musk, Los Angeles
Mark Zuckerberg, Palo Alto
Sharon Osbourne, Los Angeles
John Paulson, New York
Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece, Athens
Joaquin Phoenix, Los Angeles
Brad Pitt, Los Angeles
the Polk Museum of Art, Florida
The Qatari Royal Family, Doha
Lou Reed, New York
Aby Rosen, New York
The Saatchi Collection, London
Paul Smith, London
Daisy Soros, New York
Elizabeth Taylor, Los Angeles

Kanye West, Los Angeles
White House Collection, Washington, DC

AWARDS

2016 The Spirit of Elysium, Los Angeles, California

PUBLICATIONS

2020 FAME exhibition catalogue (Halcyon Gallery)

2019 Superstar exhibition catalogue (Modern Art Museum)

2016 Superstar exhibition catalogue (Halcyon Gallery)

2015 Pelé: Art, Life, Football exhibition catalogue (Halcyon Gallery)

2014 Helter Skelter (Bankrobber.)

2011 Goat Blood (Bankrobber.)

2011 American Envy (Bankrobber.)

2008 Rebel Rebel (Art of Elysium)

2008 Diamond Dust (Kessler Gallery)

2007 Fame+Shame (Bankrobber.)

2006 White Rabbit (Art of Elysium)

2005 Russell Young: fame, shame, and the realm of possibility (The Art of Elysium)