

As Exciting As We Can Make It: Ikon in the 1980s **2 July – 31 August 2014**

A survey of Ikon's programme from 1978 to 1989, *Ikon 1980s* is a highlight of our 50th anniversary year. The comprehensive selection of paintings, sculpture, installation, film and photography, much previously shown at Ikon, reviews a pivotal decade, coinciding with the rise of postmodernism. In Britain it was a fast-moving zeitgeist that chimed in with broader cultural shifts, in particular the politics that evolved under the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. They revolutionised our society in ways that continue to reverberate.

Ikon 1980s includes the work of artists such as Rasheed Araeen, Vanley Burke, Helen Chadwick, Susan Hiller, Dennis Oppenheim, Cornelia Parker and Sean Scully. Oppenheim's extraordinary installation *Vibrating Forest* (1982) will return to Ikon, 33 years after its debut, alongside Hiller's *Monument* (1981), a combination of park bench, audio recording and 41 photographs of memorial plaques that is now in the collection of Tate.

At the same time, Cornelia Parker will show a new sculptural piece comprising a suspended circle of squashed silverware that corresponds to *30 Pieces of Silver* (1988), a major work in her early career, now also in the collection of Tate. A kind of critical response to monumental floor-based sculpture, it also characteristically conflates ideas of preciousness and perceived cultural value with traces of a traumatic event.

Ikon 1980s is an opportunity to consider carefully and celebrate the achievements of Hugh Stoddart and Antonia Payne, Ikon's directors during 1978 – 1989. Both were ambitious in the face of local and national adversity and this exhibition is dedicated to them. So too all the artists they worked with, many of whom either were appreciated at the time for their significance or have since gone on to enjoy deserved recognition.

The culture and politics of the 1980s and its influence will be the focus of a related public programme, including artists' talks and film screening. A major publication accompanies *Ikon 1980s*, including an essay by Ikon's current director, Jonathan Watkins, and interviews with Hugh Stoddart and Antonia Payne.

ENDS.



Ikon Gallery

1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS

0121 248 0708 / www.ikon-gallery.org

Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon, registered charity no. 528892

Note to Editors:

1. Following on from *The Best Things in Life Happen Accidentally* (2004) and *This Could Happen to You* (2009) - surveys of the 1960s and 1970s respectively – *Ikon 1980s* is the third chapter in an ongoing account of art shown by the gallery since it opened in 1964.
2. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Admission is free.
3. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.
4. For more information, high-res images and to arrange an interview with the curator please contact Helen Stallard on 0774 033 9604 or email h.stallard@ikon-gallery.org

Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
tel. +44 (0) 121 248 0708 / fax. +44 (0) 121 248 0709
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