

**Fiona Banner**  
***Scroll Down And Keep Scrolling***  
**10 October 2015 – 17 January 2016**

*This press release is typeset in a new font designed by Fiona Banner, titled Font*



Fiona Banner, *Verses Versus* (2015), Light box, silver welded aluminium frame, 110 x 60.5 x 10cm each, Courtesy the artist and Frith Street Gallery London

*Scroll Down And Keep Scrolling* is the most comprehensive exhibition of Fiona Banner's work to date, re-presenting key early projects alongside recent and unseen works that span a period of 25 years. "It is not a survey – more of an anti-survey," says the artist. "A survey suggests something objective, historical, and fixed. This is subjective; nothing else is possible." Throughout the exhibition Banner revisits her work with intensity and humour.

Banner came to prominence in the 90s with her *wordscapes*; written transcriptions of iconic films retold in her own words. *THE NAM* (1997) is a 1,000 page book that details scene-by-scene six Vietnam War films - including *Full Metal Jacket* and *Apocalypse Now* - in such a way that they blur into each other. The outcome is, the artist once said, the verbal equivalent of a "gutting 11 hour supermovie". Jovially lambasted

as 'unreadable' by one critic, Banner responded with the 1997 performance *Trance* in which she read aloud the book in its entirety, in one sitting. These pivotal works mark the entry point of the exhibition and are a gateway for much of Banner's later practice, particularly her explorations of the novel *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad.

In a recent collaboration with the Archive of Modern Conflict, Banner commissioned Magnum photographer Paolo Pellegrin to take pictures of London's financial district literally through the lens of a conflict photographer. The resulting works use Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as a filter through which to read the tribal behaviour of those in the business of finance, an environment of weary survivalism combining competitive trading floors, corporate art collections, manic drinking cultures, luxury shopping and strip clubs. Included in this exhibition are a related series of large-scale graphite drawings entitled *Mistah Kurtz - He Not Dead* (2015), depicting magnified details of pinstripe, the iconic costume of trade in the City.

The exhibition also includes several recently completed films by Banner marking a new trajectory in her practice. *Chinook* (2013) focuses on the absurdist spectacle of military air shows in the UK in which the Chinook helicopter performs an aerial ballet, carefully choreographed to push the craft to its limit for the purpose of display. In *Tête à Tête* (2014) two mechanically operated windsocks participate in a kind of dialogue based on a scene from a costume drama. Set in the pastoral English countryside, the protagonists' interactions are played out mutely, their fitful semaphore referencing Banner's concern with the power and limitations of language and our (her) struggle to communicate.

Punctuating the gallery are various *Full Stop* sculptures (2015): full stops in different fonts blown up to human proportions. Previously incarnated in bronze, here they are presented as malleable bean bags and within the exhibition provide a moment to sit; to pause for thought. Banner's tactile approach to material is evident too in *Work 3* (2014), a life-sized glass scaffold tower which stands tall in Ikon's vaulted space, its fragility undermining any possibility of usefulness.

Publishing is central to Banner's practice and she often produces books through her own imprint The Vanity Press. For the artist the act of publishing is itself performative, and this exhibition at Ikon will

display a wide archive of previously unseen publications and ephemera. In addition, the artist will also publish a major new book to accompany the exhibition, typeset in a new font created by the artist and entitled *Font*. An amalgamation of typefaces Banner has worked with previously, it will be used throughout the gallery for the duration of Banner's show. She explains:

"It's a family tree arrangement where the child of Helvetica and Capitalist mates with Peanuts and Onyx's child. Bookman and Courier mate; their child mates with Avant Garde and Didot's offspring - the final font is an unpredictable bastardisation of styles and behaviours."

*Font* is deployed for signage throughout the gallery for the duration of Banner's exhibition. The typeface is available free to download on [www.fionabanner.com](http://www.fionabanner.com) and [www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org)

Instead of formally presenting completed artworks, the book will focus on related material from Banner's personal archive compiled over the last twenty years. Matching *THE NAM* in scale, it will present a timely sequel to her first publication. The show will consequently tour to Kunsthalle Nürnberg from 24 March - 29 May 2016.

"This is a survey of work by one of the leading lights in the British art scene, at a pivotal moment in her career. We feel privileged to be presenting it" Jonathan Watkins, Ikon Director.

The exhibition is supported by Ikon's 50th Anniversary Endowment Fund and a donation from John Lewis to Ikon.

For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Emma Gilhooly or Milly Carter Hepplewhite at Pelham Communications on 020 8969 3959 or email [emma@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:emma@pelhamcommunications.com) or [milly@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:milly@pelhamcommunications.com)

#### Note to Editors:

1. Ikon exhibition opening: Friday 9 October, 6-8pm.
2. A solo exhibition of Banner's work opens at Frith Street Gallery on September 17<sup>th</sup> 2015.
3. **Fiona Banner** (b. Merseyside, UK, 1966) lives and works in London. Her website is at [www.fionabanner.com](http://www.fionabanner.com).

The artist was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2002. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Wp Wp Wp*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park,

Wakefield (2014); *Mistah Kurtz – He Not Dead*, PEER, London (2014); *The Vanity Press*, Summerhall, Edinburgh (2013); *Unboxing, The Greatest Film Never Made*, 1301PE Gallery, L.A (2012); *Harrier and Jaguar The Duveen Galleries Commission*, Tate Britain (2010); *The Naked Ear*, Frith Street Gallery, London (2010); *The Bastard Word*, Power Plant, Toronto (2007) and *Art Now Room*, Tate Gallery, London (1998). Notable group exhibitions include: *Postscript: Writing after Conceptual Art*, MCA Denver (2012) and *That Was Then... This Is Now*, MoMA, New York (2008).

4. *Scroll Down And Keep Scrolling* will be published by The Vanity Press with assistance from Ikon and Kunsthalle Nuremberg as well as using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.
5. The Vanity Press and Four Corners will also publish a new illustrated edition of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in Autumn 2015.
5. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art.
6. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free.
7. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). And Fiona Banner at [www.fionabanner.com](http://www.fionabanner.com)
8. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.
9. The Kunsthalle Nürnberg is a public institution and contemporary art centre of the City of Nuremberg, founded in 1967.