

Erotica, fetish, art

Liam O'Brien interviews influential graphic artist Jasper Goodall

The Electric Blue gallery in East London is a new venture placing contemporary art and photography at the forefront of the art scene in the Capital. In a particularly modern touch, it concentrates also on lifestyle elements such as hairstyling, fashion and parties (we're thinking Richard Mortimer style occasions here). In order to launch the gallery, they have acquired the services of renowned graphic artist Jasper Goodall. The opening last week marked something of a first for Goodall himself. It is his first exhibition, the first instance in which his non-commissioned work has been displayed as art. After a career in editorial design - gathering a portfolio that boasts such diverse names as Gucci, Nike and MTV - Jasper has begun to explore other forms of art and design. He has his own range of bikinis, for example. His new *Poster Girl* series presented a challenge: turning his 2D images into 3D, and then back into a 2D sculpture.

I asked Goodall whether, given a past history of work commissioned by press outlets and businesses, commercial viability was still a concern in his new work:

"In the last couple of years I've become really interested in photography as a sideline project. I've never really presented any of that work as 'this is my artwork' or 'this is a commercially viable thing to do.' I've been looking for a way to bring the photography into my work. It was always a sort of end product, how could I combine photography and illustration in an interesting way so that you end up with an actual photo at the end of the day, not just a photoshopped image with photography and illustration in it. But I've consciously also kept the two of them apart so that pictures are being held up by a real person and they're not a Photoshop product."

His new images are highly eroticised. Goodall explains that his under-

lying goal was to show that "perfection doesn't exist, and I'm ok with that. It's been an interesting journey, coming to realise the difference between people's fantasies and the reality of the world. And in relation to the exhibition, it's about how desire works, and how people's desire works. People are always more attractive when you first meet them and you don't know anything about them, you become really interested in them because you crave this fantasy about who they are. 90% of relationships fail in the first year because you find out who people are and your fantasy doesn't match up to reality. I'm really interested in how people's sexual attractions work."

His *Poster Girl* pieces are images of someone holding up an image of their own fantasy, pieces about the mask or disguise that people operate under. They depict women in latex outfits. Goodall is deeply interested in the psychological process by which basic materials and fabrics become fetishised:

"I'm intrigued by the way people perceive the body, the way it looks wrapped in shiny rubber. The way it clings to the human form and makes people look super-real. There are all sorts of connotations and references to the subliminal of shininess and lubrication, and it all comes back to sexuality."

At all times Goodall avoids cliché. He is conscious of how innocent imagery and ideas have been corrupted en masse in design. He explains that "You can get these clichés of a naughty nun, a kinky nurse. You have within that sort of image a 'bad' concept compared to a 'good' one, one of innocence and chastity. My work is a parallel between these clichés; I wanted to recreate it in a new way - it was me looking at contemporary pop culture and how it fetishises and corrupts innocence."

His new ideas are matched by new methods of working. His 'Medusa',



Above:
'Medusa' from
the *Poster Girl*
series

(pictured above) uses a combination of acrylic sculpture, photography and graphic design, with Goodall commenting that it heralded "the beginning of my work moving into three dimensions". For the moment, however, he has no plans to revisit more traditional forms, claiming "I'm not interested in painting."

Goodall's ascendancy into the elite of graphic designers came at an early age: his advice is to maintain a good personal portfolio, and to "look in magazines and get inspired by designs there."

Nevertheless, he takes copycats to

task: "There are some people who have been purposefully copying my work. I wasn't particularly aware of it until people started saying it to my face. There's a whole generation of works that are based on my aesthetics. You just have to move on and know that you don't want to look like everyone else. I think people need to be aware of the difference between being inspired by someone and being reliant on their imagery." Goodall himself cites David LaChapelle as a major influence, but his own work is undeniably the product of an individual mind with clear ambitions and artistic aspirations. **M**