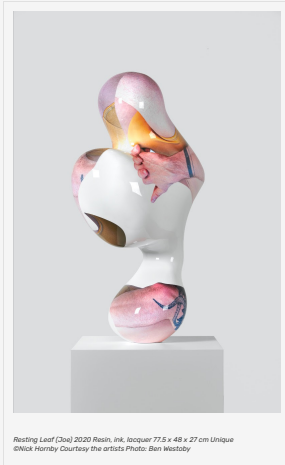


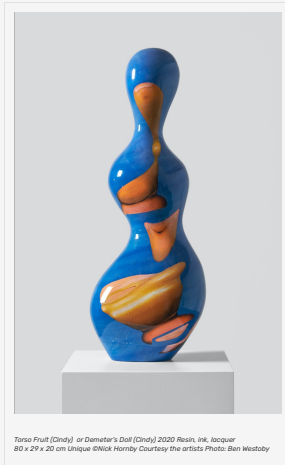
IN HIS FIRST MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL EXHIBITION, NICK HORNBY TAKES ON QUEER IDENTITY AND SCREEN-BASED INTIMACY WITH A SERIES OF RADICAL PHOTO-SCULPTURAL FORMS.

By Mark Westall · 10 November 2020

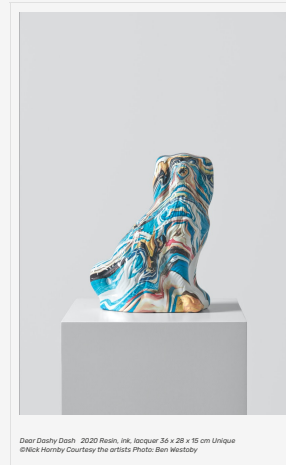
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Resting Leaf (Zoo) 2020 Resin, ink, lacquer 77.5 x 48 x 27 cm Unique
©Nick Hornby Courtesy the artists Photo: Ben Westoby



Torso Fruit (Cindy) or Demeter's Doll (Cindy) 2020 Resin, ink, lacquer
80 x 29 x 20 cm Unique ©Nick Hornby Courtesy the artists Photo: Ben Westoby



Dear Dashy Dash 2020 Resin, ink, lacquer 36 x 28 x 15 cm Unique
©Nick Hornby Courtesy the artists Photo: Ben Westoby

The artist Nick Hornby has been tackling the notion of the hybrid for over a decade. He brings high-tech processes to figuration, pulling historical, material forms into the era of screen culture. His inventions defy conventional distinctions: they are neither two-dimensional nor three-dimensional and exhibit instead what Hornby terms 'meta-cubism', a pluralistic approach to perception where neither image nor form is king.

The introduction of gender in these works mirrors Hornby's use of form—the nucleus of life referenced in the title, the zygote, is something which has not yet taken on a distinct sexual identity. With that new subject comes a personal intimacy which Hornby's work has previously resisted: as 'confessions' in the exhibition title reveals, these forms carry allusions to autobiography. In turn this links back to screens and our complicated relationship with them: 'The transition from formal to very personal comes quickly, at the click of a button', Hornby says of cyber interactions, 'suddenly, the boundaries shift completely'. This flickering between and blurring of identities is exactly what Hornby expresses through his sculpture, in forms that ebb and flow as we watch, bringing another dimension to the genre of portraiture.

The screen offers a carefully manipulated version of the world around us but it is also something controlled by touch. These sculptures, similarly, are set apart from the artist's hand through a sequence of digital and industrial processes, but retain touch through their final, dipping process. There, the sculpture is submerged in a tank of colour-streaked, liquefied image; then lifted out, resplendent in its new skin. As Hornby says, 'I've taken these images from my liquid crystal displays (LCDs) and literally dipped sculptures through them, using an industrial hydrographic method to create an analogue version of Photoshop'.

For all the logic of the connections between the form of his sculptures and their new subject, Hornby's work is also playfully evasive. This amplifies their fluidity: ideas of autobiography are complicated by collaboration, and nine of these new sculptures were made with the photographer Louie Banks, celebrated for his fashion shoots with transgender models and drag queens. From a distance, the high gloss finish of his creations—morphing portrait busts and 'mantlepiece dogs'—have a compelling tactility. Close-up, explicit details provide an unexpected twist. These are shimmering, chameleon-like hybrids, shifting from sculpture to photograph and back again, all the while seductive and elusive.

The exhibition, curated by MOSTYN Director, Alfredo Cramerotti, is Hornby's first solo exhibition in a public institution in the UK. A monograph on Nick Hornby, edited by Matt Price, will be published by Anomie in 2021.

Zygotes and Confessions MOSTYN, Wales UK 14th November 2020—18th April 2021 mostyn.org/nick-hornby-zygotes-and-confessions

About the artist

Nick Hornby (b. 1980) is a British artist living and working in London. Hornby studied at Slade School of Art and Chelsea College of Art. His work has been exhibited at Tate Britain, Southbank Centre London, Leighton House London, CASS Sculpture Foundation, Glyndebourne, Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, Museum of Arts and Design New York and Poznan Biennale, Poland. Residencies include Outset (Israel), Eyebeam (New York), and awards include the UAL Sculpture Prize. His work has been reviewed in the New York Times, Frieze, Artforum, The Art Newspaper, The FT, and featured in Architectural Digest and Sculpture Magazine.