



Charlotte Colbert

Ordinary Madness

Gazelli Art House announces Charlotte Colbert's latest show, a study of the concerns of our digital phone-centric age

Charlotte Colbert's forthcoming show at Gazelli Art House, to open this July, examines and plays around with the familiar icons of instant communication. Colbert, a natural visual storyteller with a penchant for the surreal, examines temporality through the prism of

how we relate to the emoji and whether these digital icons are capable of transcending borders and cultural differences or an invasion of personal expression.

While recent studies show that the meanings of emojis can vary hugely between platforms, >

PRESS ENQUIRIES

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> causing miscommunication, Colbert takes the digital image and places them over the faces of her naked female subjects in a derelict setting. The genesis of the idea for the show started when the child of one of her friends saw a butterfly on a window and tried to zoom into the creature to try and make it bigger. Herself a new mother to a baby girl, she thought about how we technology relates to us on a human level and how it has become as perfunctory as eating and drinking. Colbert explains that she started thinking of civilization in the developed world as parodies of emoji families, she says, *“There’s something wonderful about technology but something very dark. We’re coming back to a symbolic way of writing but it’s someone else’s interpretation.”*

As theories of the ‘sassy pink lady emoji’, and what it means is world



news in itself, Colbert focused on creating juxtaposition between old and new, to recontextualise her subjects within human temporality and history. Half-erased figures disappear against crumbling walls. Colbert questions, what trace will the digital age leave behind? Shooting in her staple black and white medium format film, she uses double exposures to layer images of circuit boards, artificial intelligence and electronic waste presenting ghostly, holographic portraits where computers and human life are intertwined and fused into one.

Colbert shot the series in a now-abandoned, former lesbian commune in east London. Many of the female nudes who appear are members of a feminist commune in the capital, brought along by one of the subjects, a friend of Charlotte’s, an ex-model-turned-stripper. Colbert explains, *“There was something really powerful about the nudity on the shoot and I thought it tapped into a fantasy of ancient Greek female warriors.”* Using props, distorting mirrors, costumes as well as long and double exposures, Colbert creates a surreal parody of daily life as seen through twenty-first century language. Nude figures unable to connect, couples frozen in a forced state of feeling, a surreal army of circuit board women, an emoji wasteland where madness, fantasy, comedy and chaos coexist. >

Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick

SOMERSET HOUSE,
30 JUNE - 29 AUGUST 2016

Charlotte Colbert's work will also feature as part of a new exhibition, curated by Mo'Wax and UNKLE founder, artist and DJ James Lavelle, featuring a host of contemporary artists, film-makers and musicians showcasing works inspired by Stanley Kubrick. Participating artists including Sarah Lucas, Gavin Turk and Mat Collishaw have been invited to respond to a film, scene, character or theme from the Kubrick archives, shining new perspectives onto the cinematic master's lifework. Film director Alfonso Cuarón (*Gravity*) said of these "Charlotte Colbert's beautiful images capture our frailty trapped in the bubble of our own existence".

The Silent Man

FILM, DIRECTOR AND
SCREENWRITER, 2016

Colbert has just finished directing *The Silent Man*, a short film, which she scripted and directed herself starring Sophie Kennedy Clark (*Philomena*, *Nymphomaniac*), Simon Amstell (*Nevermind the Buzzcocks*, *Black Pond*), Cillian Murphy



(*Sunshine*, *Inception*) and Ben Miller (*Jonny English*). The short film will be previewed at a number of screenings and festivals from May 2016.

Biography

Charlotte Colbert is an artist and filmmaker. She has developed a strong visual identity as an artist. In addition to her solo shows, and large-scale public displays, her work has been shown at major international fairs such as *Hong Kong Basel*, *Istanbul Art Fair*, *Miami* and *Photo-London*.

Her photographic work is strongly anchored within the language of film and storytelling. Her pictures are mostly conceived as a series, a sequence developed in script format before being shot. Her work has strong philosophical undertones, and often plays on questions of time, space and identity.

Colbert's work has been likened to the surreal work of Toomer, Breton and Dalí (Phaidon), an "exploration of the human mind" (*Vogue*) and as "existing in that space of dreams and nightmares" (*Las Ultimas Noticias*). Laura Bailey in *Vogue* wrote: "A truly original visual storyteller, her images are hauntingly evocative". Dorothy

Bohm photographer and co-founder of the Photographer's Gallery in London has written of her "Some photographers take pictures and others make them. Charlotte is most definitely in the second category, her pictures a gateway into her search for meaning and her very special way of seeing."

Charlotte lives in east London with her husband, Philip Colbert pop-art inspired designer and fashion label founder and her daughter.

PRESS INFORMATION

Private view
30 June 2016

Dates
1 July –
13 August 2016

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