nearly twenty years. The Collyer Bristow Gallery is a unique gallery space with a dynamic exhibition programme. Collyer Bristow LLP is a UK law firm with offices in London and Geneva. The firm provides business and personal legal advice to a wide range of clients both in the UK and internationally. Collyer Bristow has been championing emerging talent in contemporary art for nearly twenty years.

Curators: Lucy Day & Eliza Gluckman

Voorsanger / Alice May Williams / Carey Young
Freddie Robins / Monica Ross / Jo Spence / Jessica Joy Gregory / Margaret Harrison / Alexis Hunter / Frances Jemima Burrill / Helen Chadwick / Sarah Duffy / Rose Guler Ates / Helen Barff / Sutapa Biswas / Sonia Boyce

Dumpleton’s response is complex and engaging. His approach to his work is highly innovative and inspirational. His work is characterised by a strong sense of identity, and the themes of diversity and difference are explored through the use of language and imagery. His work reflects the complexities of contemporary society and the challenges of human relationships. His work is thought-provoking and engaging, and it invites the viewer to consider the issues and themes that he addresses. His work is highly original and distinctive, and it is a testament to his creativity and talent.

Sarah Duffy

Recent graduate Sarah Duffy spent a year researching the practice of belly figures. The practice, now more commonly known as ventriloquism, goes back to ancient historical times and appears throughout various religious texts. It was women who were associated with this ability, often believed to have been possessed by gods and demons, enabling them to speak without moving their lips. Duffy began exploring these themes for her project "Discrimination Act in the UK, a law that aimed to change the woman's place in British society. Body, femininity, sex, and their own place in a complex and male dominated art practice, within the context of sexual and gender equality, have been championed, and more so, by women artists in the 1970s and 80s. She stated, "I wanted to create work that challenged these narratives and stereotypes."

Rose Finn-Kelcey

Rose Finn-Kelcey is revered as an iconic, innovative feminist artist. Much of her work was ephemeral but some of her photographs and other works have been collected internationally, including by the Tate. The title of her work, 'The Restless Image - A Discrepancy Between the Felt Position and the Seen Position', is self-explanatory and characteristic of the ambivalent nature of art practice. The confident handstand (inspired by an old photograph of her mother as a young woman) belies the possibility that the potential for collapse remains ever present.

Helen Chadwick

Helen Chadwick's highly influential work is synonymous with the feminist art movement. Her work from the 70s through to the 90s and continues to provoke and inspire subsequent generations of artists and groups. She is currently in the 56th Venice Biennale exhibition, with both humour and darkness. Through drawings and etchings she explores the characterisation of women and their own place in contemporary art. In her project "A Woman's Place", she created a very personalised and subjective act of memory. The wallpaper has the music industry (see essay). Boyce's multi-disciplinary works look at modes of communication, displacement and desire. Diverse in output, Biswas encompasses themes of time and space and desire. Diverse in output, Biswas encompasses themes of time and space and desire. Diverse in output, Biswas encompasses themes of time and space and desire.

Sonia Boyce

Sonia Boyce's 'Devotional Wallpaper' is part of a larger project and body of work called 'The Devotional Collection'. As a very personalised and subjective act of memory, the wallpaper has the music industry. Boyce's multi-disciplinary works look at modes of communication, displacement and desire. Diverse in output, Biswas encompasses themes of time and space and desire.

Guler Ates / Helen Barff / Sutapa Biswas / Sonia Boyce

Jemima Burrill / Helen Chadwick / Sarah Duffy / Rose Guler Ates / Helen Barff / Sutapa Biswas / Sonia Boyce

An Exhibition Guide

An Exhibition of Contemporary Art Reflecting on 40 Years Since the Sex Discrimination Act

2015 marks 40 years since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act in the UK, a law that aimed to change the landscape of our society. Curators Day-Gluckman have been exploring these themes for their project A Woman's Place which addresses the contemporary position of women in our creative, historical and cultural landscape through contemporary art.

Works by over 20 women artists reflect the changes in art practice, within the context of sexual and gender equality, since the introduction of the Act. Some artists confront issues that galvanised the change in law whilst others carved their own place in a complex and male dominated art world. The exhibition presents a snapshot of the evolving conversations that continue to contribute to the mapping of a woman's place in British society. Body, femininity, sex, motherhood, economic and political status are explored through film, photography, sculpture, performance and painting.
Alison GILL

Alison Gill has re-made her piece ‘It’s All Over’ from 1993, which included the artist’s long plait, sliced off and placed in a vitrine. A work inextricably linked to a moment in time or a rite of passage, the work was sold and subsequently ‘disappeared’. Twenty-two years later the artist is recreating the work, using hair bought on the internet, creating a multi-layered narrative on ageing, changing ideas of beauty, femininity and the values of production.

Helena GOLDWATER

Helena Goldwater’s sustained performance practice is represented in the exhibition by images from the beginning of her career through to more recent work, wearing what has become her iconic red dress. Throughout her career this dress has remained a constant as the performances have evolved. The familiarity of the objects that she uses in the performances: hair, milk, ice, for example, offer potent moments of exchange and transformation - both actual and psychological.

Joy GREGORY

One of the major artists to emerge from the Black British photography movement of the 1980s, Joy Gregory’s work engages with the discussions surrounding race, history, gender and aesthetics. Whilst social and political issues are integral to her practice, the work is rooted in the concepts of ‘truth and beauty’. In Libretto we show two works ‘Kitten Heels’ from the series ‘Girl Thing’ 2002–10, a cyphon in which the shoes are contorted to suggest pieces of meat, and ‘Hair Grip’ from ‘Objects of Beauty’ 1992–95, an image recently used on the cover of a new edition of ‘The Second Sex’ by Simone de Beauvoir.

Margaret HARRISON

Founding the London Women’s Liberation Art Group in 1970, Margaret Harrison has been involved in art, action and feminism for four decades. Between 1973 and 1975 she collaborated with artists Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly to conduct a study of women’s work, reflecting in part on the changes in labour and industry brought about by the Equal Pay Act. The resulting findings were made into the installation ‘Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry 1973–1975’, first displayed at the South London Art Gallery in 1975. In 2013 Harrison won the prestigious Northern Art Prize. The dipthys on show at Libretto are representative of her ongoing questioning of gender inequality and the objectification of women.

Alexis HUNTER (1948–2014)

Alexis Hunter was a celebrated feminist artist who reflected on sexism and the politics of body image through much of her photographic works. ‘Suffragette’, a hand-coloured Xerox mounted on paper by Hunter from 1968, is the earliest work on show in Libretto and depicts a group of contemporary women in bygone dress, marching with placards, echoing their suffragette predecessors. The concerns of these women of the ‘60s are vast large on their banners and highlight a women’s movement that focussed predominantly on issues of female subjectivity.

Frances KEARNEY

Frances Kearney’s photographs are considered tableaux of female experience and relationships. Her series, ‘Like Mother Like Daughtier’, explores the dynamics of the inter-dependence between mothers and daughters. For ‘Like Mother Like Daughtier’, III, the mother, taking some ‘time out’, is sitting on the sofa linking drinking straws in a repetitive act. The elder daughter looks on holding the baby. Do we read this as neglect or as a moment of calm and a creative outlet from the all-consuming demands of childcare? Kearney is non judgemental, and the spiralling straws, a nod to the famous 1970s land art work ‘Spiral Jetty’ by Robert Smithson, suggests a creative internal landscape that exists beyond the persona of ‘mother’.

EL MAJOR

EL Major’s photographs deal with personal identity and the manipulation of image. Day-Gluckman showed her powerful series, ‘Marie Claire RIP’ and ‘Jezebel’, at Collyer Bristow Gallery, in 2013. For 2015 we have chosen works from Major’s series ‘Shoulder to Shoulder’, which uses archival images from the suffrage movement and footage of contemporary protests. The artist herself re-enacts key moments, when the suffragette Mary Richardson attacked Velazquez’s ‘The Toilet of Venus’ (also known as the ‘Rokeby Venus’) with a knife, for example. By using her own portrait in the images Major continues the discussion, persnally interrogating motive, and reflecting on the politics of today.

Eleanor MORETON

Eleanor Moreton is interested in the ‘mystery of depiction’ and how the viewer relates to the painted picture. Her recent body of work consists of reproductions that produced the source material from which she works, from genre paintings through to photographs and illustrations. ‘Nina’, ‘Aretha’ and ‘Gillian’ come from her series ‘Absent Friends’, a personal homage to the women musicians and writers that the artist admires. Moreton says of the women in the series that “They are all women defined by their creativity and for whom a public image was secondary, undesirable or troublesome.”

Hayley NEWMAN

Hayley Newman’s work and activism are inextricably mixed. Her performances and crafted objects stem from her interest in the roles of the individual and the collective, most recently in relation to current economic, social and ecological crises. For Libretto Newman is showing a small selection from her series ‘Domesticque’, used, donated tea towels, dusters and dishtowels, which she has embroidered at home with trimmings, threads and sequins to become an anthropomorphised mass of faces conveying a range of emotions.

EJ MAJOR

EJ Major’s photographs deal with personal identity and the manipulation of image. Day-Gluckman showed her powerful series, ‘Marie Claire RIP’ and ‘Jezebel’, at Collyer Bristow Gallery, in 2013. For 2015 we have chosen works from Major’s series ‘Shoulder to Shoulder’, which uses archival images from the suffrage movement and footage of contemporary protests. The artist herself re-enacts key moments, when the suffragette Mary Richardson attacked Velazquez’s ‘The Toilet of Venus’ (also known as the ‘Rokeby Venus’) with a knife, for example. By using her own portrait in the images Major continues the discussion, persnally interrogating motive, and reflecting on the politics of today.

Carey YOUNG

‘Donor Card’ by Carey Young considers the legal status of an artwork, the relationship between art and institutions and the critical analysis that is inherent in that exchange. The original work comprised an edition of five hundred credit card–size “donor cards”. The text on the card stated that it only took on the legal status of being an artwork when the viewer signed it, and thus status as art “would only last as long as I was alive, or the viewer was alive, whichever was the shorter”. The material for Young’s artistic practice, including the tools and mechanisms used across corporate and political disciplines, critiques the interconnection between economics, art, justice and politics.

Alice May WILLIAMS

Recent Goldsmiths graduate (2014) Alice May Williams tells stories through video, drawing, installation and performance. Her MAFA Degree show work ‘We Can Do It!’ resulted from the ‘googling’ of the words ‘Rosie the Riveter Boys’. The resulting image is a World War II icon, and the multitude of images that came alongside. She likes to “dip in and out of different social groups, finding the gaps and over-sees as many identifying gestures, genres, colours, codes and languages”, and to identify what it is that makes us part of a group.