

C L I F F O R D
C H A N C E



Annual Pride Art Exhibition –
London

Summer 2012

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We are pleased to present our Annual Pride Art Exhibition, organised by Arcus, Clifford Chance's LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) and allies employee networks in London and New York, to celebrate Gay Pride.

This year's London exhibition entitled 'A Question of Sport: LGBT artists and their relationship to inclusivity' features a mix of abstract, conceptual and figurative works. We would like to thank the artists for lending their work to the exhibition and for providing the statements about their practice and their thoughts around the theme. Thanks also to Michael Petry for his curation of the exhibition.

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A Question of Sport: LGBT artists and their relationship to inclusivity

We often use sporting metaphors to inspire success: to go for gold; to give 110%; to cross the finishing line; to claim the podium. And what if we don't succeed? Well, we then console ourselves by saying 'it's the taking part that counts'... but nobody believes that nonsense: as sportspeople say 'a good loser is still a loser'.

The same is true off the sports field. Britain used to celebrate the fact that *gentlemen and players* would enjoy a game of cricket across the class divide: but once the match was over (in my experience, mostly a draw after five days) the gentlemen returned to their grand estates, and the players to their rough working class homes, and everyone knew who had really won. Today, instead of Edwardian class struggle, we act out other conflicts through sports: in the changing room, male coaches taunt male teams that *the ladies* had better work harder, or that losing would be *so gay*; and in the media, journalists perpetuate the innuendo that all sportswomen are lesbians, or are men in drag. Martina Navratilova has stated that she wonders why male journalists fixate on lesbian players, and not on gay male players.

Sports place athletes in competition with one another. And when their bodies are so perfectly attuned that just fractions of a second separate winning from losing, then alternative sources of competitive advantage may be fair game, not least psychological advantage. In athletics, gender (or rather, the appearance of gender difference) was used against Caster Semenya. And in group sports, sexuality has often been used against players, even against their own teammates. When Justin Fashanu came out in 1990, he was the first professional footballer to do so. Rival fans targeted him, the sporting establishment did little to protect him, even his own brother, the football player John Fashanu, publicly disowned him. Sadly Justin took his own life. Twenty years later not a single major league professional footballer in any country is openly gay.

Things are a bit better in rugby: Ian Roberts (Australia) came out in 1995, and Gareth Thomas (UK) in 2009. As for the Olympics, Matthew Mitcham (Australia) is the only openly gay sports person to have won a gold medal (2008, 10 meter platform dive) and, I believe, will be the only openly gay sportsman at the 2012 Olympics.

Unsurprisingly, then, for many LGBT people (and a whole lot of nerdy or *not good at sports* straight kids), schools sports fields and locker rooms were and remain zones of actual or imminent humiliation. Only a lucky few found these positive places to grow and shine.

There are signs of change. Dan Savage's *It Gets Better* project seeks to combat homophobia in US high schools (and reduce the shocking rate of suicide amongst gay teens); President Obama and Hillary Clinton have recorded messages for the project, encouraging kids to hang in there. And Ben Cohen (former rugby player, different-sex lover and all-round good egg) runs a charity to address homophobia in British schools and sports fields.

With all these thoughts in mind, and entirely unrelated to anything else that might be going on in London this summer, the 2012 Pride art exhibition focuses on LGBT artists and sportspeople. I invited all the artists that have previously exhibited to make a portrait of a sports person they admire (of any gender, sexuality, sex, ability or standing - local hero or international idol), or to create a work that deals with sport in some way. I also asked each artist to provide a brief text, explaining their choice. Unsurprisingly, the works are very diverse: some are conceptual and others figurative, and in many media (video, photography, painting and sculpture).

Michael Petry, Curator
2012

Kerry Andrews

...Alan Turing is a national figure as a code breaker and a mathematician, but he is probably less known as a competitive runner. The illogical and contradictory actions and ideas in Turing's life are fascinating. His very physical use and pleasure in running seems far removed from the abstract mathematics and his logical system for 'reproducing' the act of thinking...



Kerry Andrews *The discrete and the continuous*
Mr Turing 2012 digital print

Paul Ashurst

...*33 Gay Athletes* is a list of gay sportsmen, born since 1970, randomly sourced from the internet and painted in fluorescent colours; gold, silver and glitter! I want to make the most luscious picture, also quite strong and handsome. The sportsmen were chosen randomly as I've only ever heard of one of them...



Paul Ashurst *33 Gay Athletes 2012 mixed media on canvas*

Annie Attridge

... I have chosen the athlete Caster Semenya for my subject matter. Rumours around the track about her supposedly manly appearance and her clearly visible physical strength became the subject of an official enquiry. I have depicted Caster sitting isolated in the moment it was announced that the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) had demanded the athlete undergo gender testing...



Annie Attridge *Adams Apple* 2012 porcelain, tin and enamel glaze

James M Barrett

... I was always the youngest and smallest in my year at school, so I never cut it at traditional sports. But back when I was five my dad took me to my first circus and I was blown away. This artful athleticism eclipsed anything that any organised sport could ever offer me. Deep inside I secretly recognised something gently queer about the big top. I pressed my dad to rig me a small trapeze in the back garden, and escaped to it whenever I could. These portraits are a tribute to two aerialists who have particularly inspired me, both pioneers in new circus arts...



James M Barrett *Circus Portraits: Alex Harvey - Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Ockham's* 2012 C-print on Fuji Archival paper

stav B

... I have chosen anka as my subject for the sports series, because she translates her favourite sport, cycling, with a fresh and individualistic attitude. Cycling for her is all about freedom and adventure, while keeping fit and, as she is on her own vehicle, totally in control, she dresses according to her moods and the weather, a delightful image of sport, art and character...



stav B anka, 33. visual artist. keen cyclist and runner. London 2012
c-type print

Guy Burch

... The figure of an aquatic male Olympian is naturally attractive to a gay male. Seeing Tom Daley and his synchronised diving partner Peter Waterfield, I cannot help but be reminded of the Greek ideal of older to younger male bonding. My work seeks to marry that to an echo of Hellenistic reliefs and in particular the fresco decoration in 'the tomb of the diver' at Paestum. The ceiling shows a beautiful naked diving youth, while on the walls below, male symposium couples form his celebrating audience...



Guy Burch *The Diver and his Shadow: Tom Daley & Pete Waterfield* (work in progress) 2012 mixed media painted relief

Nigel Cox

... I first saw David O'Mer performing in La Clique, an alternative circus show with incredibly quirky acts. I was hugely impressed and knew that I had to paint him. I later discovered that David had been a gymnast since the age of five, winning the German nationals on floor and horizontal bar. When he was thirteen, David was part of the international team competing in Los Angeles, winning Bronze. An incredible athlete and a talented performer . . . but above all David is a truly decent person...



Nigel Cox *The Calling I* 2010 oil on linen

Roberto Ekholm

... I have chosen Tom Daley for his courage and determination. He became the youngest winner in the British Championships in 2008 and gained international success at an early age. While being a public/tabloid figure, he was at the same time going through personal difficulties. The idea of a young Daley finding comfort and strength 10 metres above the water is an intriguing and vertiginous thought...



Roberto Ekholm *109C* 2012 video still

Simon English

"My Sweet Lord, I really want to know you, I really want to see you Lord...

When you got heartache, there ain't nothing you can do"

Dedicated to Agnes B, sponsor of Paris Foot Gay.



Simon English *Jesus Wayne Picasso* 2007 ink, acrylic on paper

Robin Forster

... (At school) I used to dread PE and games lessons. I developed the ability to position myself on the field in the least likely place for anyone to pass me the ball and maintain this very effectively throughout the match..... I willed the weather to be so bad that games would be cancelled and at best I would be sent on a cross-country run...



Robin Forster *Untitled #6 (The Fear of Games)* 2012 digital C-type print

Sunil Gupta

...Since India is a country where public figures are still hesitant to be "out", especially in sports, I decided to make a picture of one of Delhi's leading gay activists. Gautam Bhan has been a visible, vocal and significant figure in the myriad ways in which the struggle to bring about a change in India's anti-sodomy laws has taken shape, a legal battle that is now in its last leg as we await the Supreme Court's final judgment. And, of course, he's an amateur athlete and runs every day...



Sunil Gupta *Gautam Bhan, Deer Park, New Delhi* 2012 digital C-type print

Martin Gustavsson

...It seems to me that the participation and looking at sports is about experiencing and creating pleasure. This work is part of a larger, ongoing body of work *In No Particular Order* that is mainly to do with building random narratives and the pleasure of looking. It is also loosely based on the ancient myth of Orpheus and his dispersed body...



Martin Gustavsson from *In No Particular Order*
oil on linen, photo ©Liam Daniel

Åsa Johannesson

...Åsa Johannesson seeks to explore the photographic portrait's mediation of self-image and gender. Her work particularly focuses on masculinity. In *The Basketball*, teenage boy Jacob, who identifies as transgender, nostalgically conjures the artist's tomboy persona...



Åsa Johannesson *The Basketball* from the series
The Boy & The Twins 2008 c-print

Alana Lake

...This contemporary documentary project, comprising of photography and video, stems from an interest in the spiritual being. Whilst on a residency in Italy, I have been working with The Shinken swordsmen of Alba, who practice Kendo and laido. Both of these sports lie close to classical forms of Japanese martial tradition, where physical strength and accuracy are strongly aligned to spiritual and moral development. It is taught that all of these must be interwoven if one is to follow 'the way of the sword'...



Alana Lake *The Swordsmen of Alba* 2012
digital C-type print

Sadie Lee

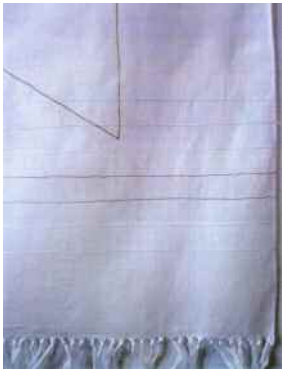
...Born Stanislaw Walasiewicz, Stella Walsh was a Polish-born athlete who became a Women's Olympic Champion in 1932. In 1980, at the age of 69, she was an innocent bystander in an armed robbery and was killed by a stray bullet. Autopsy tests discovered that she had two sets of chromosomes, XX and XY, an Intersex condition known as 'Mosaicism'...



Sadie Lee *Stellar* 2012 oil on canvas

Stuart Mayes

...I choose Harold Abrahams for his refusal to let other people's prejudice restrict him. Abrahams used his athletic skills to counter the anti-Semitism that he experienced at Cambridge University and went on to win an Olympic gold for Britain in the summer games of 1924. I believe that Abrahams demonstrates exceptional integrity and I am inspired by his life long commitment to a vision of excellence beyond prejudice...



Stuart Mayes *Harold Abrahams 1924* (detail) 2012
cotton and metallic thread on cotton

Matthew Miles

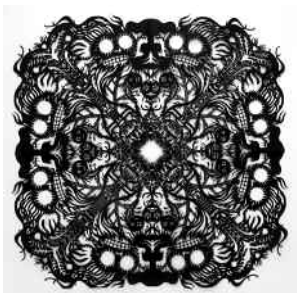
...I lose myself running hard in the woods and fields on the edge of north London. I met Callum that way. He's a runner - running hard in fields and woods and pavements, but also on the track in high-level competitions for his athletic club. Callum is 19, a hopeful for Rio 2016, and out of bed most mornings at dawn. He trains five times a week and fits in study, gymnastics and performing arts too. I admire his determination; his push for perfection – or to be as much as his body will let him...



Matthew Miles *Runner (List)* 2012 Fuji Flex C-type print

Garry Parsons

...The title of this work is a quote from the much admired British marathon runner and world record holder Paula Radcliffe. The energies in the body that drive the athlete through the demands and pressures of sporting life are represented as characters and considered highly valuable, a matter of life or death. Here, the raw characters of the inner world, the inner 'Motivators' and 'Drivers' become real...



Garry Parsons *"I Can't Imagine Living And Not Running"* 2012 paper

Michael Petry

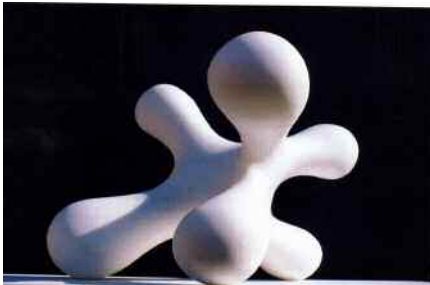
...Whilst I wouldn't describe myself as a fan of football, I'm definitely a fan of football players. In fact, I'm a big fan of Wayne Rooney, Dave Kitson, Neil Lennon, Adam Bogdan, Alexi Lalas, Richard Eckersley, Ben Watson, Gareth Bale, Joe Cole, and Eric Cantona. You might have spotted that most of them are red heads. Most people don't seem to find Wayne attractive, but I, to my shame, am his number one fan...



Michael Petry *Portrait of Wayne*, 2012 cast orange glass

Louise Plant

...Plant's sculpture is energised and inspired by all her sporting heroes from John Hollins to George Best, Bjorn Borg to Ilie Nastase and Martina Navratilova to Billie Jean King... Entitled *Ps*, they embody a sense of fun, occupying space figuratively with the apparent sophistication of a number who know their insides from their outer situation...



Louise Plant *P.1.B.* 2012 marble

Anja Priska

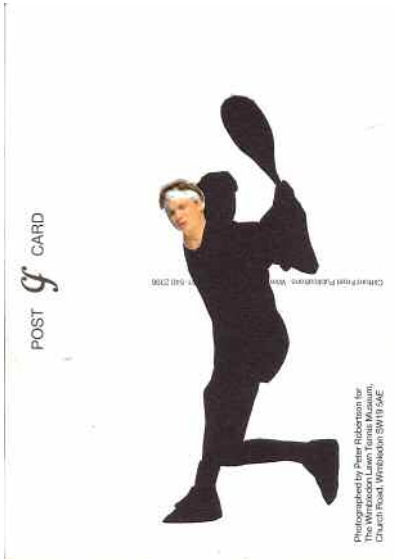
...The interactive installation *use my body, be a star* broaches the issue of gender specific characteristics within sports and questions their value sets. The viewer is invited to step behind the installation and assume the role of an athlete in order to be photographed 'as a star'. So I am examining the relevance and the preparedness of adopting a role, a topic which runs like a thread throughout my sculptural work and paintings...



Anja Priska *use my body - be a star* 2012 sketch

Ryan Riddington

...*David* relates to a memory from mid-December, 1991 where, aged 13, I became fixated by a pair of legs belonging to a male tennis player. I was watching the Grand Slam Cup and David Wheaton (US) was on his way to becoming champion. Although not overtly sexual, my then inexplicable feelings carried enough homoerotic charge to stay with me to this day...



Ryan Riddington *David* 2012 collage

Andrew Salgado

...*Lee Pearson* is a subject of interest to me because I'm attracted to subjects who exhibit elements of imperfection. With regard to this wake of *Olympiana*, so much that is celebrated becomes about strength and perfection, so it became my desire to explore a figure that has succeeded in the face of adversity and pain...



Andrew Salgado *Lee with Gentleman* 2012 oil on canvas @ Beers.Lambert Contemporary, London

Cathy Stocker

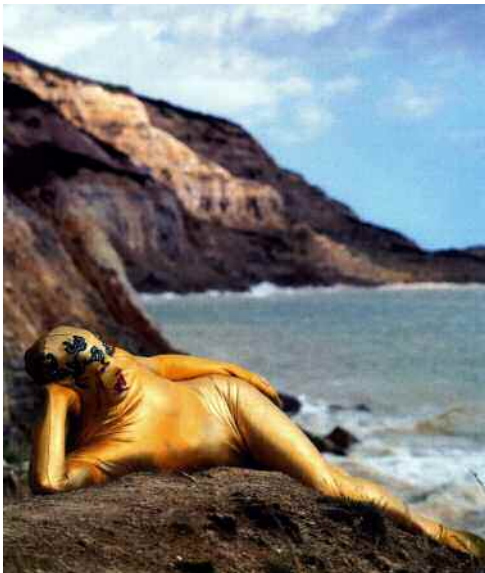
...Martine Wright, 7/7 survivor and Paralympic athlete's incredible story of survival and accomplishments, is an inspiration on so many levels. Martine sustained the worst injuries of all the survivors, losing both her legs. However, she has re-built her life, a long and arduous task and has married, had a son, been skiing, made a parachute jump and has spent the last two years training as a Paralympic athlete in Women's Sitting Volleyball...



Cathy Stocker *Diptych of Martine Wright 2012* (detail)
acrylic, oil and 23.5ct Gold Leaf on canvas

Robert Taylor

...even assuming the most conservative of demographic estimates, by now we should be celebrating the achievements of scores, if not hundreds of fully out top level LGBT sports stars across a range of disciplines. Sadly, there is the persistent phenomenon of the vast majority of high achieving LGBT sports stars staying firmly in the closet. I wonder about the personal impact on the individuals concerned...



Robert Taylor (in collaboration with Thierry Alexandre) *In and Out* giclee print on aluminium

Klaus Wehner/ Museum Clausum

...Klaus Wehner takes as his subject one of western art history's most well known athletes, the *Discobolus* or *Disc Thrower*. The usual image of an idealised body that is a model of athletic discipline and human beauty is here replicated out of a multitude of body parts. This fragmentation provides a reminder on the physicality of 'body' that is in contrast to the iconic image of the beauty of the athlete...



Klaus Wehner/ Museum Clausum *The Picture of Discobolus*, digital C-type print

Kraig Wilson

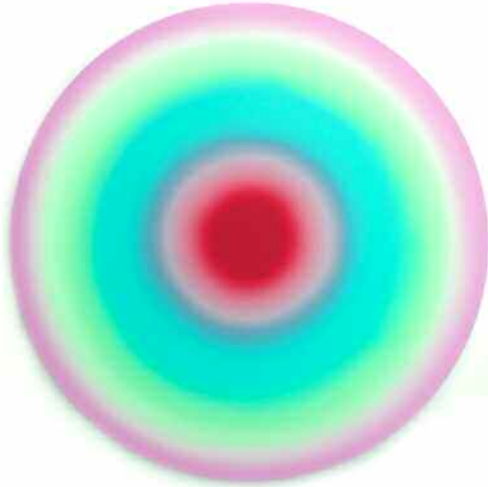
...My decision to choose the sport of fencing stems from two points of interest which reoccur within my art practice. The elaborate "costume" and concealed face, and the paradox or symbolic act of violence within the boundaries of safety, viewed then as sport. I find a very beautiful tension between the fencers as I'm interested in the grey area between aggression and respect...



Kraig Wilson *Untitled The Fencer # 1* digital C-type print

Konrad Wyrebek

...*Recall 7teen* is an abstract representation of the time I last recall thinking about athletes. They were sprinters, and the colours I'm using are ones I associated with their dynamism, energy and sexiness...



Konrad Wyrebek *Recall 7teen* 2012 acrylic and oil paint on canvas

The dates of the London exhibition are:

11 June – 20 July 2012

The exhibition is open by appointment on Fridays between 12:00 – 18:00, contact Nigel Frank on 020 7006 5384 or nigel.frank@cliffordchance.com

All works are for sale.

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Works courtesy of the artists.

Cover image: Simon English *Jesus Wayne Picasso* (detail) 2007 ink, acrylic on paper

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