

ANTHONY REYNOLDS GALLERY

MiArt 2019: Decades

JON THOMPSON

Jon's time at Goldsmiths had a transforming effect on the practice, reception and status of art and artists in this country but his own practice, while unrelenting, was too much concealed by his generous care and promotion of others. No more.

Jon was a hot property in the early sixties, exhibiting from 1960 at the Rowan Gallery, alongside Jeremy Moon, Barry Flanagan, Paul Huxley, William Tucker among others and the subject of two solo shows at the legendary Green Gallery in New York where Richard Bellamy was the springboard to success for a generation of great American artists. Jon took up full time teaching in 1970, he stopped painting; he just felt that painting was a full time activity itself and if he was to commit himself to teaching, a serious painting practice was simply not possible. He could not stop making art of course but he turned to other things.

When I abandoned direct public service in 1982 Jon was one of the first artists to whom I looked. In the summer of that year, as a parting shot to the Arts Council and a preview of my future intentions I organized a small exhibition as a fringe event at the Venice Biennale. *Collazione Inglese* included 6 artists. Alison Wilding, Paul Richards, John Murphy, Gerard Hemsworth, Silvia Ziraneck and Jon Thompson. Jon's contribution was the sublimely evocative 5 panel text piece, *Singular Cruelties* where the text was laid out in the form of bottles of perfume.

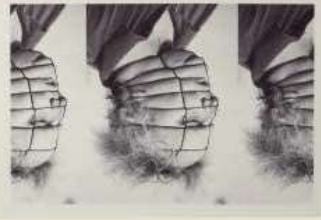
In 1987 we had our first solo show. A wall $\frac{3}{4}$ m thick and stuffed with insulation fibre was built right across the gallery; in its centre was an old closed door bearing the scratch marks of a desperate dog's attempts to enter. Of course this was not just any old door but was shipped from Andalucia, a near neighbour to the one, remarkably similar, sourced by Duchamp for *Etant Donnees*. The space behind the wall, though brightly lit, was inaccessible. The doorstep was constructed of carpet felt and twenty thin sheets of lead. On the wall two framed texts spelled out the statement 'In spite of myself I am a meticulous man'. On a flanking wall a triptych titled *Tragedy Tragedy Tragedy* represented two large naturalistically painted waterfalls bracketing a central text panel of Ovid describing the creation of Hermaphrodite. Jon's work could be challenging.

From 1992 to 1998 Jon was in charge of postgraduate studies at the Jan Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. His work became simultaneously more sculptural, more performative and more photographic.

We made an exhibition in 1997 where a three metre image of his naked back could be seen hanging from a steel bar together with images of his face, right way up and upside down, painfully strapped with tight bands deforming his features. It was from this series that the Tate collection acquired a work.

Anthony Reynolds

THE CRUELTY OF
THE CLASSICAL CANON



J. J. J.

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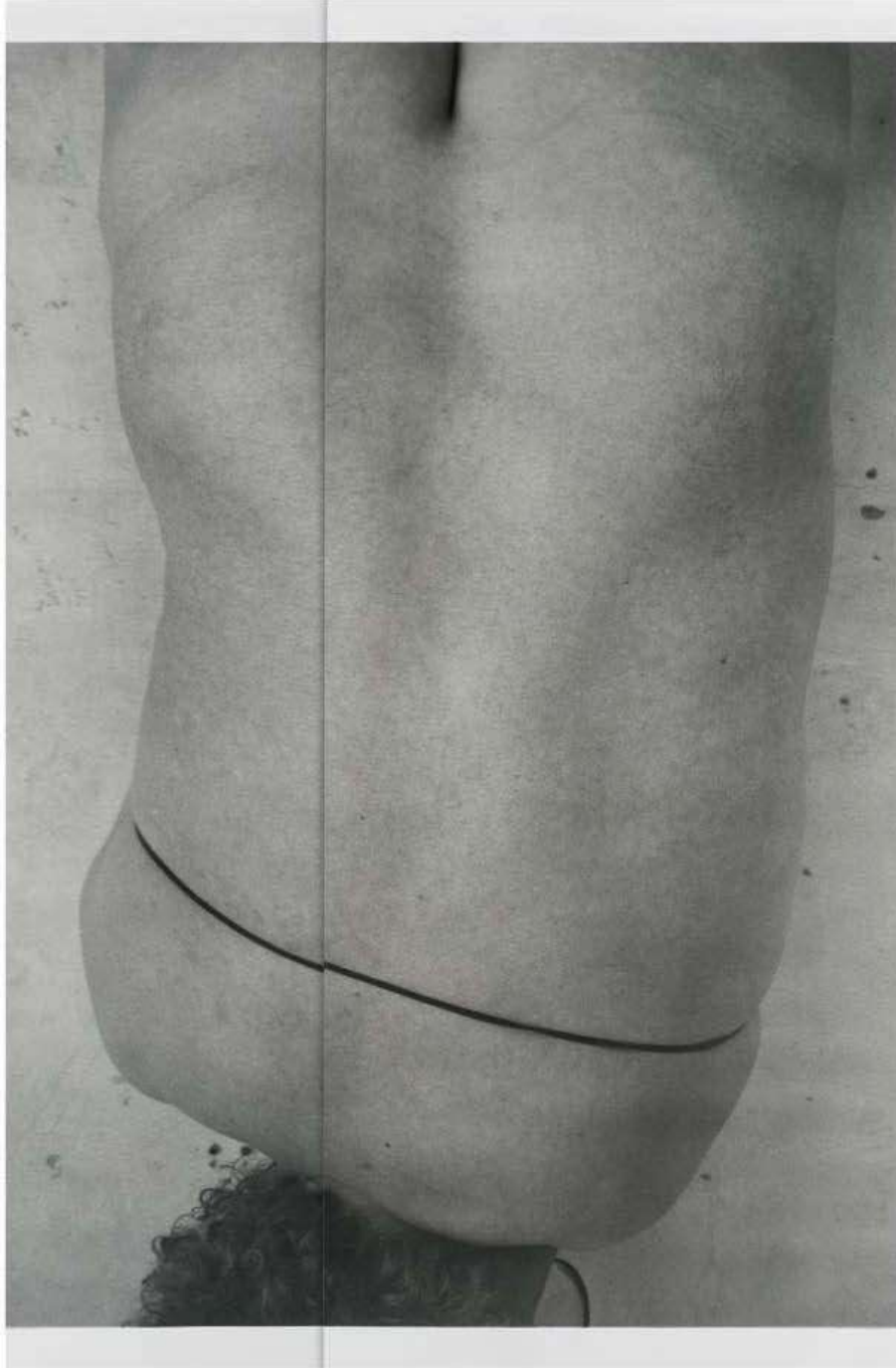
The Cruelty of The Classical Canon

1987

Screen print and photo on paper, signed and editioned

Edition of 6 + 2 AP

99 x 69 cm



Back
1997

2 silver gelatin photographs, hanging bar
Executed in 1997, this work is from an
edition of two plus one artist's proof
282 x 170 cm

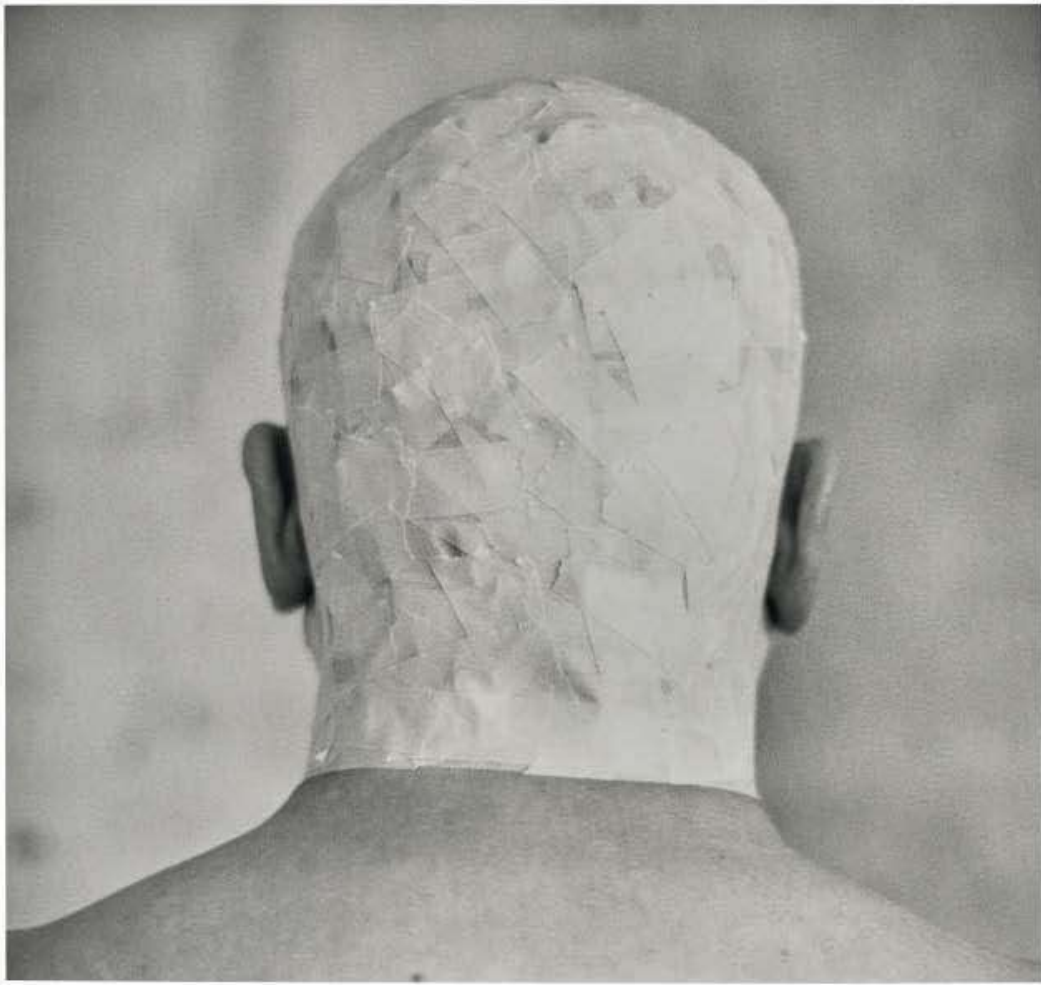


Untitled

1996

2 silver gelatin photographs mounted on aluminum
118 x 112 cm

Executed in 1997, this work is from an
edition of two plus one artist's proof



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Untitled

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2 silver gelatin photographs mounted on aluminum
118 x 112 cm

Executed *circa* 1996-1997, this work is from
an edition of two plus one artist's proof

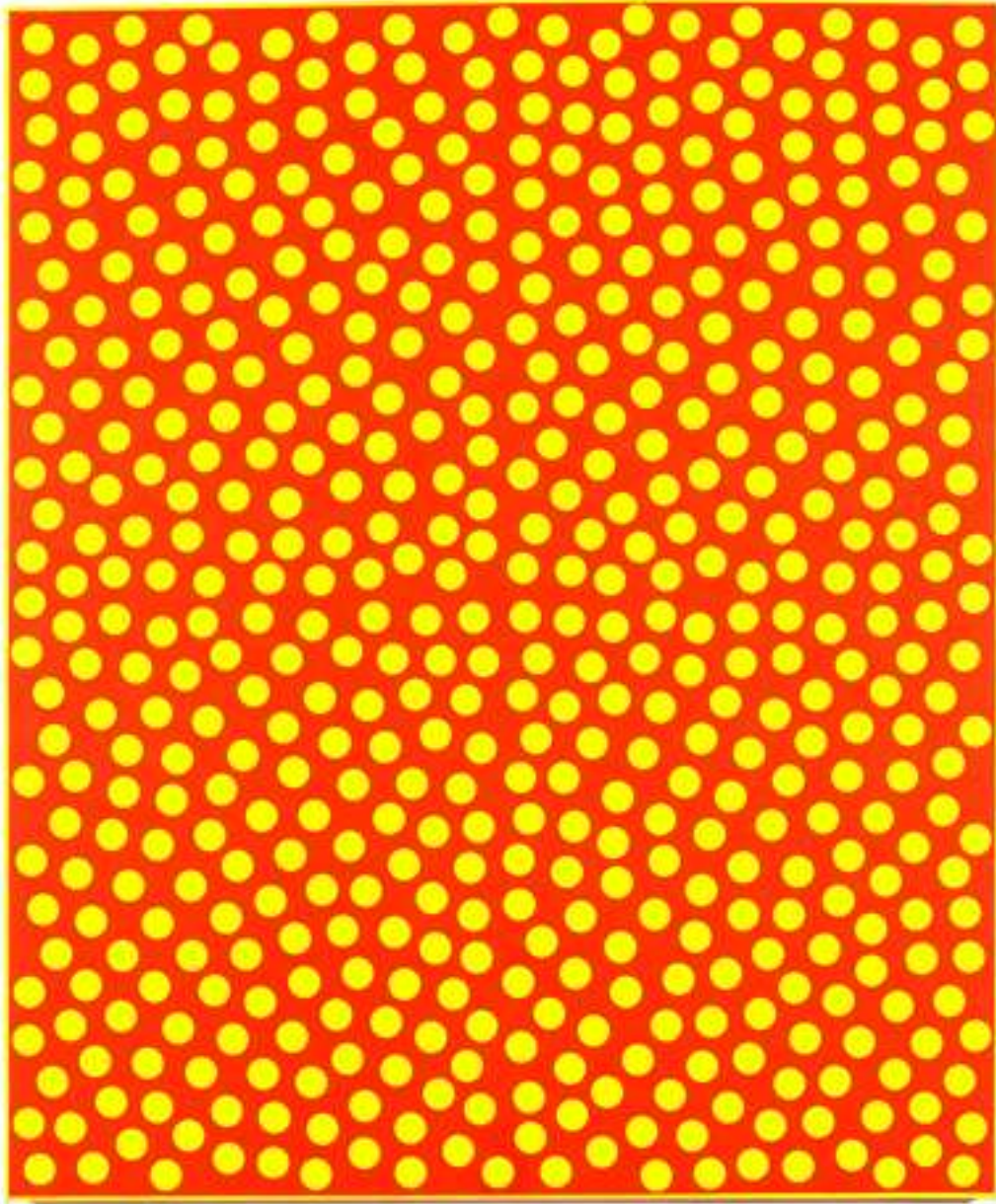


Untitled

1996

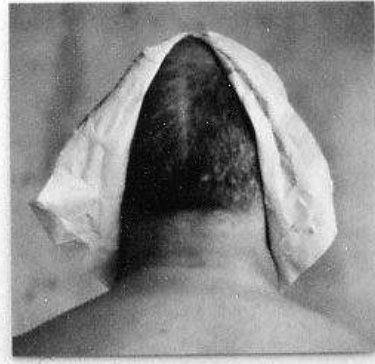
2 silver gelatin photographs mounted on aluminum
118 x 112 cm

Executed *circa* 1996-1997, this work is from
an edition of two plus one artist's proof



LYCO, the origin of the sign

2005
Oil on canvas
150 x 125 cm



Exhibition view of Jon Thompson's solo show at the Dhondt-Dhaenens Museum in Deurle
Ghent, 1996.