

Nick Hornby & Sinta Tantra: Collaborative Works

Working in collaboration means that the participants must negotiate, and when two artists work together this may be tricky. The general assumption is that the artist works alone and is egocentric, answering only to the self, the sounding board being self-discipline, looking at art that has gone before and that of his or her peers. When working together, voicing opinion, providing critical analysis and exercising mutual respect requires both strength and tact.

Nick Hornby and Sinta Tantra met when studying at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, from which they graduated in 2003 – Tantra went on to study further at the Royal Academy Schools and developed her work along the lines of colour and installation while Hornby, after a year at Chelsea College of Art, set up his studio practice as a sculptor. He works items by past masters of sculpture and architecture into vital and complex three-dimensional puzzles. Tantra had already collaborated with others, in particular with dancers and choreographers (such as Made by Katie Green), providing environments in which the dancers played out their compositions. The terms of engagement between the visual artist and the dancers were not difficult, as each had distinct roles. However, in the case of two visual artists working together Hornby and Tantra have found that they had to plan very carefully and converse frequently.

Their first pieces took the form of straightforward application of Tantra's colour to Hornby's sculpture, through which they found the need to be rigorous in terms of composition and form. Would the sculpture be compromised or enhanced by this or that pattern? Might the form be more meaningful with linear motifs or blocks of colour? Which colours might best suit the scale of the sculpture? Would only certain sculptures be right for this treatment? On the other hand, how might Hornby give form to Tantra's palette and shapes – her abstract compositions, or her exotic imagery? Further along in their preparation for this exhibition, they worked together from first principles, coming up with proposals for innovative interventions into the fabric of the Lobby of One Canada Square, which has provided another dimension to their collaborative endeavour.

Nick Hornby began making his name as a sculptor of note in 2008 when he won the Clifford Chance Sculpture Prize, making pieces – some on an ambitious scale – largely, but not exclusively, in white. He developed abstract forms through analysing and combining aspects of sculpture by modern masters with architects from many periods. His challenge was to find a new and vital language through reshaping, moving, distorting and therefore reinterpreting (existing) form into something new and fresh. In an article he wrote for *The Ampleforth*



Nick Hornby & Sinta Tantra *The Broken Man in Cornforth*, Hague Blue, Arsenic, Lush Pink, Incarnadine and Downpipe 2012

Journal Vol 114 (2011) he claimed that he grapples with the transition of an idea into reality, interpretation and narrative. Not so very unusual for an artist, but his artistic journey so far shows his aims clearly.

In this exhibition, Hornby's sculpture **The Horizon Comes (Ted Hughes)** 2010 has been recreated as **The Horizon Comes in Chinese Blue, Hague Blue, Archive, Railings, Cornforth, Bubblicious and Firefly Red** 2012. Made in a composite of marble and resin this sculpture referenced forms found in Elisabeth Frink's (1930–1993) **Horse and Rider** 1975 that stands in Piccadilly; Constantine Brancusi's (1876–1957) **The Cock** 1924 and Alexander Calder's (1898–1976) **Flamingo** 1974, which is located in the Federal Plaza in front of the Kluczynski Federal Building in Chicago. The scale of Calder's sculpture is phenomenally large, standing at some fifty-three feet tall. Aspects of each of these pieces may be readily identified in Hornby's sculpture, but particularly clear are Calder's arching form, the hooves of Frink's horse and the cock's comb. However, the sculpture now has the complicating overlay of colour, initiated by Sinta Tantra but decided upon by both artists working together. The new title pays reference to the colour names of industrial paints. Painting the sculpture is the vital step that takes the forms onto another plane, further disguising or revealing the elements that Hornby took into his sculpture in the first place.

Hornby's **The Broken Man** 2010 is also made in a composite of marble and resin, and again is overlaid by Tantra's colour and pattern, thereby reborn as **The Broken Man in Cornforth, Hague Blue, Arsenic, Lush Pink, Incarnadine and Downpipe** 2012. The form comes from Auguste Rodin's (1840–1917) **The Walking Man** 1877–78, Barnett Newman's (1905–1970) **Fallen Obelisk** 1963 and again, Brancusi's **The Cock**. When visiting Hornby's studio during the course of the artists' work for this exhibition, we observed on the studio wall numerous computer-generated images of the sculpture overlaid with differing blocks and lines of colour. These formed the basis of decisions the artists made together about the final surface of the existing white sculpture. The animation that colour and pattern gives to the three-dimensional form has the power to change, transforming the object into something dynamic, calm, jazzy or symphonic.

I found my friends, they're in my head, in Cornforth,



Nick Hornby & Sinta Tantra *The Horizon Comes in Chinese Blue, Hague Blue, Archive, Railings, Cornforth, Bubblicious and Firefly Red* 2012

Hague Blue, Railings, Drawing Room, Chinese Blue, Lush Pink and Bubblicious 2012, in its first purely white form, was based on eighteenth-century sculpted portraits in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London: Sir Francis Chantrey's (1781–1841) **Bust of John Raphael Smith** 1725, who was a famous printmaker; Sir Thomas Banks' (1735–1805) **Bust of Dr Anthony Addington** 1790, a distinguished doctor who specialised in the treatment of mental illness and Joseph Nollekens' **Bust of Sir George Savile** c. 1743, a well-known politician. Interestingly the portraits of both Addington and Savile were based on death masks. Hornby's sculpture is one of a number he made in 2010 on the themes of **Patrons, Muses and Professionals** that were exhibited at the Eyebeam Window Gallery in *New York represents the Professionals*. The series was made in marble resin composite. Here again Hornby created the sculptural form by drawing elements from the works of others. Through Tantra's intervention, the head has been redrawn through veils of vibrant colour.



Nick Hornby, still from *An Arch Never Sleeps* 2011

Untitled Proposals 2012–13, two maquettes for larger sculptures, have been invented by Hornby in collaboration with architect Patrick Tantra, in response to Sinta Tantra's colour compositions. The way in which she transforms spaces and objects leads the viewer to read their inherent forms differently, through her deft handling of flat areas of saturated colour, geometric shape and line. Hornby has picked up on these installations in which she overlays architecture, including rooms and structures of various kinds, with colour.

By including two non-collaborative pieces in the exhibition – one by each artist – we hope to clarify their individuality as artists, in order to better understand the collaborative works. A video piece by Nick Hornby **An Arch Never Sleeps** 2011 shows an animated line drawing for a series of hypothetical sculptural pavilions, which through a process of deconstruction and reconstruction changes from Filippo Brunelleschi's (1377–1446) **Pazzi Chapel** in Florence (started in 1441 and completed in the 1460s) to **Atomium**, a 102-metre high centrepiece of the Brussels

Expo 1958 designed by the engineer André Waterkeyn with interiors by architects André and Jean Polak. The transformations give the clearest insight to the way in which Hornby finds his sculptural imagery.

With her installation **Le Bonheur II** 2013, Sinta Tantra has taken the opportunity to create one of her colour compositions using vinyl covering one of the windows of the Lobby. The transformation of a familiar feature that is seen, but probably not really noticed, by the many people who pass by every day, has become through her intervention something strange and transient. The colours reflect those she has used in the permanent painting titled **A Beautiful Sunset Mistaken for a Dawn** 2012 on the DLR bridge crossing Middle Dock at Canary Wharf. Tantra's inspiration for the painting was gained through close attention to the Canary Wharf environment, including the natural elements, ever-changing light and the towering buildings.

Together – head to head – Hornby and Tantra have devised a startling intervention in the perceived structure of the west-facing wall of the south-western lift shaft cladding of pink marble. They also engaged the photographer Sylvain Deleu in creating the piece, as it



Sinta Tantra, CGI for *Le Bonheur II* 2013



Nick Hornby & Sinta Tantra in collaboration with Sylvain Deleu CGI for *Purposes of Marshalling* 2013

was technically challenging, and required considerable expertise in generating the image through a computer. **Purposes of Marshalling** 2013, a trompe-l'œil chevron that seems to have been carved into the wall, has a witty connotation telling that this is where it's at.

Ann Elliott January 2013

Nick Hornby, born in 1980, is a rising, young sculptor living and working in London. He studied at Wimbledon College of Art 1999, the Art Institute of Chicago 2003, the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London 2003 and Chelsea College of Art 2007. Since his exhibition on graduating from the Slade in 2003, Hornby's work has been included in group exhibitions, mostly in London, but also in regional galleries in Britain and in India, Greece, the United States and Poland. He has also had solo exhibitions in London and New York.

Hornby's work may be found in the collections of Andaz 5th Avenue New York; Clifford Chance; Richard Greer; David Roberts; Selfridges and Sony BMG. His most recent commission, **Old Shapes New Brutality** 2012 in powder coated aluminium, which stands 4 metres high, was made for the *Third Mediations Biennale* in Poznan, Poland, and is located at the Poznan-Lawica Airport. nickhornby.com

Sinta Tantra, a British artist of Balinese descent, was born in New York in 1979. She studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London 1999–2003 and at the Royal Academy Schools 2004–06. Tantra is well regarded for her site-specific murals and installations – many in the public realm. These include works for Canterbury Christ Church University, Transport for London's Art on the Underground programme *Platform for Art*, Create KX London, the London Borough of Camden, the Southbank Centre, Canary Wharf Group and Liverpool Biennial.

Tantra's solo exhibitions include *Play to Win Part 1* at The Parlour Studios and Project Space, London 2007; *Real Phoney* at Monika Bobinska Gallery, London, 2009; *Arsenic Fantasy*, Gaya Fusion Gallery, Bali 2009 and *Politics of Seduction*, Picker Gallery, University of Kingston, 2010.

A recipient of many awards, including research grants from the British Council and Arts Council England, Tantra's work is in the collections of Britain's Government Art Collection and private collections in America, Britain, Spain and Indonesia. She lives and works in London. sintatantra.com

EVENT Exhibition tour Tuesday 12 February 1.15pm
Curator Ann Elliott tours the exhibition with Nick Hornby and Sinta Tantra. Tickets are free but please contact Canary Wharf Public Art Office at visualart@canarywharf.com to reserve a place

Photographs courtesy of the artists

LIST OF WORKS

NICK HORNBY & SINTA TANTRA COLLABORATIVE PIECES

The Horizon Comes in Chinese Blue, Hague Blue, Archive, Railings, Cornforth, Bubblicious and Firefly Red 2012
Marble resin composite, paint
300 × 240.9 × 75.1 cm

The Broken Man in Cornforth, Hague Blue, Arsenic, Lush Pink, Incarnadine and Downpipe 2012
Marble resin composite, paint
300 × 176 × 64.4 cm

I found my friends, they're in my head, in Cornforth, Hague Blue, Railings, Drawing Room, Chinese Blue, Lush Pink and Bubblicious 2012
Marble resin composite, paint
58.9 × 25.3 × 33.3 cm

All of Leighton in Hague Blue, Lush Pink and Cornforth 2013
Marble resin composite, paint
98 × 75 × 44 cm

Untitled Proposals 2012–13
Painted wood
each: 85 × 36 × 74 cm
made in collaboration with Patrick Tantra

Purposes of Marshalling 2013
Printed vinyl
500 × 1200 cm
made in collaboration with Sylvain Deleu

NICK HORNBY
An Arch Never Sleeps 2011
HD Video, edition of 3
Running time:
16 minutes 12 seconds

SINTA TANTRA
Le Bonheur II 2013
Vinyl on glass
480 × 390 cm

front cover Nick Hornby & Sinta Tantra I found my friends, they're in my head, in Cornforth, Hague Blue, Railings, Drawing Room, Chinese Blue, Lush Pink and Bubblicious 2012 Designed by Tim Harvey Printed by Jamm Print & Production

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CANARY WHARF

Sculpture at Work

Nick Hornby & Sinta Tantra: Collaborative Works



Curated by Ann Elliott for Canary Wharf Group

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