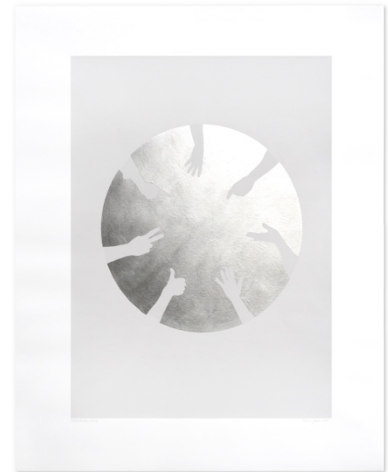


PRESS RELEASE

Nicola Green - Unity

Exhibition at Zuleika Gallery, Woodstock 16th January - 14th March 2021



To mark the inauguration of President Biden on 20th January 2021, Zuleika Gallery is delighted to present 'Nicola Green - Unity', an exhibition of work by the British artist and social historian, related to the time when the artist witnessed, first-hand, Barack Obama's meteoric ascent to power as the first African-American President of the United States in 2008. The exhibition presents Green's iconic silkscreen prints, and two brand new works titled *Unity I & II* created in response to the 2020 United States Presidential election, shown together for the first time at Zuleika Gallery in Woodstock, Oxfordshire. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the exhibition will continue to be installed at the gallery but will be presented virtually, via video, and virtual viewing appointments. An artist talk with Nicola Green will be hosted on Zoom during the exhibition.

At a time when we are facing deep divisions across our societies, shaped by intensely partisan politics, and social and economic inequality, this exhibition is a reminder that when people come together they can achieve the seemingly impossible. The two new works created in 2020, *Unity I & II*, are a celebration of the democratic process, a commemoration of change, and a symbol of hope.

The iconography in these artworks is derived from *Day 1, Light*, the first of the seven silkscreen prints from Green's critically acclaimed series 'In Seven Days...' for which Green created the symbol of the seven hands, with different gestures, united in a circle of light. This is a powerful example of how non-verbal gestures embody and communicate so beyond words.

The imagery represents the long arc of history, it can take generations to enact meaningful change, and many years before the impact is truly understood. The original design was inspired by the Democratic National Convention which took place on the 28th August, 2008, a hugely significant date in African American history. It was not only the day President Obama accepted the Democratic nomination, but also the passing of the UK Slavery Abolition Act in 1833 and the date of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963.

The iconic design in *Unity I & II* has been reproduced in red, white, and blue. It has taken on a new level of meaning, representing pride, freedom, heritage, liberty and justice.

In Seven Days...

Between August 2008 and January 2009, Nicola Green witnessed Barack Obama's meteoric ascent to power as the first African-American President of the United States. Over six trips across the country, Green gained unprecedented artistic access to President Obama's monumental campaign. From the infamous DNC nomination speech in Denver, to election night in Chicago, to Inauguration in Washington D.C. Green was behind-the-scenes taking photographs, making sketches, and having conversations with press, staff and citizens.

Green's intention was to make a portrait of the Presidential hopeful, to understand why this story had captured the interest of the entire world. As the story began to unfold she was struck by the implications Obama's campaign would have for future generations, and particularly for her three children who, like President Obama, have mixed heritage.

"I began to think deeply when I was pregnant with our first son about how my children would experience the world differently to me by virtue of the colour of their skin. I wanted to understand what that would mean for them. So I started thinking about role models, how the world would see them, how they would see the world." Nicola Green

Green focused on her role as a witness on behalf of her children. She watched President Obama speak at his 2008 DNC nomination, on the 45th anniversary of Martin Luther King's momentous 'I have a Dream' address. Green began to reflect on the wider trajectory of history of Obama's campaign. She realised it would be many years until we could truly understand the impact, across the world, of Obama's election on the next generation. She spent years reflecting upon what she had witnessed, and what she had recorded before creating *In Seven Days...*

Nicola Green's silkscreen printing development

After her numerous trips to the US on Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign, Nicola Green had amassed a huge archive of sketches and photographs, as well as newspapers, magazines and paraphernalia. Green spent countless hours researching the complex themes contained in this story. She deliberated for months, working out how to distill this extensive primary material and research.

Green understood that she must find new and unique ways to make sense of this story, to uncover its most essential meaning and form, and ensure its themes could continue to be explored and understood for generations to come. The artist began her process at the London Printworks Trust, an institution uniquely experienced in hand printing textiles. Here she used vast silk screens on endlessly long tables, printing onto reams of paper. She began by isolating elements from her many sketches and photographs, projecting and printing the sectioned images at speed with the goal of exposing the most powerful and pure symbols from this mass of material.

Through the process of pushing ink through the screens again and again, it became clear which elements conveyed meaning, and which could be discarded. By using the screens as a drawing tool Green pushed the boundaries of her materials; overlaying icons, multiplying them, reducing them: testing the limits of negative space, pattern and repetition. Green unsentimentally experimented with their form and colour, exposing the most essential gestures and symbols. Through these relentless processes, Green's abstractions minimised line whilst still maintaining critical form. Through this practice, meaning was layered into every inch of the apparently simple imagery.

A virtual Private View of *Nicola Green - Unity* will take place on 15th January 10.30 am - 5.30 pm, by appointment. Please contact info@zuleikagallery.com

ENDS

Illustrated: Top left and middle: *Unity I* and *Unity II*, 2020, Two-colour silkscreen print with water-based pearlescent ink on Somerset white cotton paper 400gsm, H35 x W33 cm, Edition of 25. Right: *Palladium Wave*, 1/1, 2010, Two-colour silkscreen print with, water-based ink and hand-applied palladium leaf on cotton paper 400gsm, H118.4 x W95.5 cm

About Nicola Green

Nicola Green is a critically acclaimed social historian and visual artist. Green has established an international reputation for her ambitious projects that can change perceptions about identity and power; exploring themes of race, spirituality, religion, gender, and leadership. Green has gained unprecedented access to iconic figures from the worlds of religion, politics, and culture, including collaborations with Pope Francis, President Obama, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Dalai Lama. Driven by her belief in the power of the visual image to communicate important human stories, Green chooses to assume the role of 'witness' to momentous occasions taking place across the globe. Inspired by her own mixed-heritage children and multi-faith family, she creates and preserves religious, social, and cultural heritage for future generations. Recording these events as they happen, and investing many hours of academic and artistic research, Green builds and curates substantial archives.

Notable Public Collections

The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington D.C., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C., International Slavery Museum, Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, Glenhurst Gallery of Brant, Canada, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh, Sir John Soane's Museum, London, Jewish Museum, London, Paintings in Hospitals, UK, Bruce Castle Museum, London, Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford

Recent Solo Exhibitions

2019 Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, Oxford
2018 St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London
2017 Candida Stevens Gallery, Chichester, Sussex
2016 Flowers Gallery, London

Recent Group Exhibitions

2018 Grayson Perry's Room of Fun Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, London
2018 London Art Fair Islington Design Centre, London
2017 The Diaspora Pavilion 57th Venice Biennale, Venice
2017 Good Nature Candida Stevens Gallery, Sussex

About Zuleika Gallery

Zuleika Gallery was founded in Oxford in 2015 by Lizzie Collins and focuses on Contemporary and Modern British Art. Artists represented by the gallery include Trevor Sutton, Manijeh Yadegar, Andy Barker, Rachel Gracey, Claudia Clare and Frances Aviva Blane. Lizzie Collins is History of Art graduate of UCL, and a postgraduate of the Courtauld Institute in London. Lizzie was a director and auctioneer at Bonhams, and a specialist at Christie's in 20th Century British Art, before founding Zuleika Gallery. In 2016 Lizzie set up the art programme for Saïd Business School, University of Oxford where she has curated exhibitions by Nigel Hall RA, Nicola Green and Alice Kettle.

For further information and images please contact info@zuleikagallery.com or visit www.zuleikagallery.com

In line with government guidelines, the gallery is closed physically. A virtual viewing appointment booking system is available, and our exhibitions can be viewed online. Announcements regarding openings or further lockdown measures will be shared on the gallery website and social media. Our COVID-19 Policy is available to read on the website.

Normal Gallery open times:

Monday - Saturday 10.30 am - 5.30 pm, Sunday 12 pm - 4pm

Follow Zuleika Gallery on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram: [@zuleikagallery](https://twitter.com/zuleikagallery)