The Multiple Store @ Canary Wharf

Limited Editions by
Major Contemporary British Artists

Something special sometimes develops when people with careers outside the art world have a passion for and informed interest in the visual arts and contemporary artists. One such exemplar is The Multiple Store, which was established in 1998, the collaborative idea of lawyer Nicholas Sharp and Sally Townsend, who was at that time an arts editor and journalist. A great innovation that is still flourishing today, The Multiple Store is the only UK organisation that specialises in commissioning editions of sculpture and other works of art in three dimensions, known as ‘multiples’.

Founded as a not-for-profit company, The Multiple Store aims to commission new editions by some of the best contemporary British artists and to foster the culture of collecting by offering these at sensible prices. Profits from sales are ploughed back into new commissions.

One of the most interesting aspects of The Multiple Store is the close way in which they work with artists and foster artistic innovation. Artists are urged to experiment, not only on a small scale, but also in materials they may not normally use. For example, Fiona Banner, then already known for her monumental punctuation marks, created a collection of black-glazed ceramic full stops (Table Stops, 2000), while Simon Periton worked for the first time with fragile, hand-blown glass (Barbiturate, 1998).

The Multiple Store funds all origination and production costs. Once sales are made and the initial investment is recouped, the artist receives a royalty on sales for the rest of the edition. Edition sizes range from 10 to 100, with recent editions tending to be fewer than 50. The artists sign,
by The Multiple Store feature in this exhibition; a number are not able to be shown to advantage in the Lobby – largely those in two dimensions. However, the variety of artistic ideas and use of materials is evident: from plastic to a re-formed atlas, aluminium, wood, glass, bronze, ceramic, silicone, resin, and a pulped paper book, these pieces are variously comments on how life in cities can be now; links between people and places; humorous takes on the human condition, and the object as a thing of beauty; the sculptural process chiming with the artist’s concept.

For the collector keen on the variety of ideas, materials and techniques found in contemporary British art, The Multiple Store is a good place to begin and to continue collecting.

The Multiple Store was launched at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1998. At first it operated from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (1999–2003) but now sells through the internet, art fairs and from regular exhibitions in supportive London galleries. Initial funding came from a small surprise legacy from a friend that Nicholas Sharp invested in the first seven commissions by artists Keith Coventry, Dalziel + Scullion, Grenville Davey, Graham Gussin, Kenny Hunter, Cornelia Parker and Simon Periton, which set the tenor for the diverse commissioning that continues today with considerable success.

Sharp and Townsend
approached artists whose work they admired and whom they considered would create challenging, appealing editions. They worked closely with them and the chosen fabricators, ensuring as far as they could that the artists’ ideas could be successfully realised at high quality and economic cost.

Following the launch, two national tours followed in 1999 and 2000 to major public galleries including Yorkshire Sculpture Park; Tate Liverpool; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; The New Art Gallery, Walsall; and Firstsite, Colchester, one tour part-funded by a grant from the Arts Council.

The next phase of commissioning came between 2000 and 2003, and again the variety of artists’ interests is manifest. The artists commissioned were Fiona Banner, Jonathan Callan, Dan Hays, Boyd Webb, Paul Winstanley, Rose Finn-Kelcey, Langlands & Bell, Peter Liversidge, Cornelia Parker, Alison Wilding, David Batchelor, Sarah Staton, Anya Gallaccio and Liliane Lijn. The newly commissioned works were launched at small exhibitions at Central Saint Martins and then shown at art fairs in London, Berlin and New York, with the organisation starting to attract an international audience.

Leaving its base at Central Saint Martins in 2003 was a major milestone for The Multiple Store. Sally Townsend, the full-time director, departed to forge a new career, though she remains involved to this day. Since 2003 Nicholas Sharp has run The Multiple Store on his own, assisted by freelance helpers. Work was sold from storage for three years until 2006 when the organisation started to exhibit again. In 2010, to raise funds and to increase its profile, The Multiple Store commissioned a portfolio of prints by Fiona Banner, Dan Hays and Simon Periton, which were then shown at the London Original Print Fair in 2010.

In 2010 The Multiple Store spent a year sharing a gallery in Fitzrovia with dealer Chris Westbrook.

During this period, new commissions by Kenny Hunter, Peter Liversidge and Simon Periton were launched, and shows of work by Cornelia Parker, Langlands & Bell and Kenny Hunter were held.

Ackroyd & Harvey’s Shoal 2011 started a new wave of commissioning, which continues today at a measured and successful pace, and to date encompasses Karen Ay, Mary Anne Francis, Graham Fagen, Sigune Hamann, David Shrigley, Corinne Felgate, Eric Great-Rex and Yinka Shonibare MBE.

The Multiple Store now shows regularly at art fairs and ‘pop-ups’ and returned to New York in 2014 for the first time since 2002. In 2015 they showed in Paris at a new editions fair, Multiple Art Days. A new e-commerce website was launched in 2014 and has enabled the organisation to increase its international collector-base.
One Multiple Store editioned work is being exhibited out of doors in Jubilee Park: Peter Liversidge’s Interstate 2001, a multiple made to the correct scale of an American road sign, and coloured Federal-approved US Interstate Green. Part of a series of works about the North Montana Plains, a place the artist never saw but wanted to visit, Interstate is a piece about regret, imagination and hope.

In addition to Liversidge’s work, four of the artists with a multiple showing in One Canada Square agreed to lend a piece of their work made on a larger scale for installation in the park.

The circle or disc is a recurring motif in Grenville Davey’s sculpture. House 2008, an industrially spun steel vessel inverted, rusted and polished to a mahogany sheen, has a wooden handle set centrally, angled parallel to the dome.

Kenny Hunter’s Black Swan 2013, cast in resin, stands 4 metres high. It typifies Hunter’s use of anthropomorphic symbolism, the swan evoking human qualities of enduring partnership and love, while also alluding to ‘Black Swan theory’, a term used to describe inexplicable or unexpected events rationalised with hindsight; this derives from the fact that originally black swans were thought to be an impossibility. The piece also exemplifies Hunter’s practice of transmuting historical ideas through sculpture.

A relatively recent version in Liliane Lijn’s series focusing on the shape of the cone, Lost Koan 2007, is made in glass-reinforced polyester, Perspex and fluorescent lights. It has its parallel in the space above the earth’s poles where the solar wind meets with the earth’s magnetic field, referred to by astrophysicist Dr Stephen B. Mende as the ‘lost cone’.

The Hanging Debtor 2013 is typical of Simon Periton’s decorative ‘cover’ for more serious issues
such as politics, popular culture and history. The figure, hanging upside-down, is made from water-cut steel, with layers of spray painting. The image is based on a German illustration from 1438, in which bags of coins in the cloak appear to defy gravity.

Ann Elliott August 2015

All multiples are for sale
Please visit themultiplestore.org or contact
Nicholas Sharp nick@themultiplestore.org
Telephone 07760 666518

EVENTS
The following evening events will be held from 6.30 to 7.30 pm during the exhibition, with curator Ann Elliott and Multiple Store co-founder Nicholas Sharp in conversation with participating artists:

Tuesday 6 October
Corinne Felgate, Simon Periton

Tuesday 13 October
Ackroyd & Harvey, Graham Fagen, Sigune Hamann

Tuesday 20 October
Liliane Lijn, Kenny Hunter; Grenville Davey

Tuesday 27 October
Langlands & Bell, Yinka Shonibare MBE

The events are free but please contact Canary Wharf Public Art Office at visualart@canarywharf.com to reserve a place

LIST OF WORKS
Dimensions in centimetres: height × width × depth

ONE CANADA SQUARE

Keith Coventry
Inhaler 1998
Edition 50
Cast plastic
7 x 3 x 4.5

Jonathan Callan
Poem 2000
Edition 50
Laser-cut book with silicone
14.5 x 19 x 6.5

Daiziel + Scullion
The Idea of North 1998
Edition 200
Compass in engraved Perspex disc
9 x 9 x 1

Grenville Davey
Little Emperor 1998–2001
Edition 25 of each material
Ceramic, aluminium, oak
35 x 22 x 22 each

Cornelia Parker RA
Meteorite Lands in the Middle of Nowhere 2001
Edition 20 of each location
Paper: The American series map
47 x 65 x 4

Fiona Banner
Table Stops 2000
Edition 100
Glazed ceramic, box
16.5 x 30 x 30 boxed

Alison Wilding RA
Rising 2001
Edition 35
Cast acrylic with pigment
16.5 x 16 x 12

David Batchelor
Electric Colour Picture 2002
Edition 75
Emergency exit sign, fluorescent light, acrylic sheet
24 x 48 x 7

Rose Finn-Kelcey
IT Rules 2002
Edition 50
Circuit board with LEDs in vacuum formed plastic, battery
2.2 x 9.17 x 1.5

Sarah Stanton
Post-Pop Hamburger 2002
Edition 35
Cast bronze, chrome-plate
16 x 21.5 x 21.5

Anya Gallaccio
Cast 2003
Edition 35
Acorns: Quercus Robur and Quercus Rubra, bronze, box
5.7 x 15.5 x 15.5 boxed

Liliane Lijn
Liquid Koan 2003
Edition 30
Translucent resins
30 x 12 x 12

Peter Liversidge and P. Liversidge 2003
Edition 35
Neon, Perspex, transformer
13 x 26 x 5

Mary Anne Francis
High Art Light 2008
Edition 35
Acrylic, MDF, fluorescent light
9 x 60 x 7.5

David Shrigley
Edition 80
Solid polished brass, box
14 x 8 x 6

Simon Periton
Barbiturate II 2010
Edition 35
3 x 61 x 3

Kenny Hunter
Young Olympians 2011
Edition 11 of each figure
(Runner, Discus Thrower, Swimmer, Boxer)
Painted bronze
60 x 19 x 19

Ackroyd & Harvey
Shoal 2011
Edition 30
Sea bream skeleton, alum crystals, Perspex case
14.4 x 32.5 x 6.5

Karen Ay
Terra Infirma 2012
Edition 35
Blown glass, wood, world atlas
18 x 24.5 x 13.7

Graham Fagen
Rose 2013
Edition 25
Bronze, enamel
3.5 x 22.5 x 3.5

Sigune Hamann
Diorama (colour channels) 2013
Edition 35
Photographic transparencies, acrylic block
21.2 x 31.5 x 3.5

Corinne Felgate
Baby’s got the Wedgwood Blues 2014
Edition 30
Flock on ceramic
12 x 34 x 19

Eric Great-Rex
Islands 2014
Edition 15 of each tile
(Regret, Desire, Luck, Anger)
Ceramic
20.3 x 25.4 x 3.8 each

Yinka Shonibare MBE RA
Kaleidoscope 2014
Edition 45
Cast brass, digitally-printed cotton, lacquer, mirror, lens, glass, Perspex, oil
27 x 8 x 8

JUBILEE PARK

Peter Liversidge
Interstate 2001
Multiple Store, Edition 10
Aluminium, stoving enamel, reflective materials
17 x 132 x 10.5 (excluding supports)

Liliane Lijn
Lost Koan 2007
Glass-reinforced polyester, Perspex, fluorescent lights
250 x 150 diameter

Grenville Davey
House 2008
Steel and oak
65 x 200 diameter

Kenny Hunter
Black Swan 2013
Resin
400 x 120 x 160

Simon Periton
The Hanging Debtor 2013
Powder-coated steel
240 x 101 x 0.7