

**SHE
PERFORMS:
THE BODY**

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THE GLASS TANK, OXFORD, FEBRUARY

We keep having conversations in which the consensus is that the artworld has evolved, and people are now seeing more women and other under-represented groups in museums and galleries. True - but are we simply seeing a few more women than historically represented and immediately assuming that it is pretty close to equal?

The advances towards equality made in recent years, including the appointment of women to leadership roles (think Maria Balshaw, Director of Tate since 2017), have been great and monumental, but they may also distract from the persisting inequality faced by women artists. The few leaders and women artists gaining celebrity status are sadly not illustrative of the wider artworld, especially for those fresh out of art school.

However, She Performs is not in the business of complaining without action - our mission is to celebrate great women artists and provide them with platforms for their work.

She Performs: The Body is the latest exhibition in an ongoing investigation into the issues of inclusive feminist curating and the under-representation of women artists. Through this exhibition we will explore how the body - artist's, female, human - is a site of both conflict and harmony. By showing women artists articulating women's bodies we are able to present an alternative narrative to that typically provided.

This is about our inherent womanhood, not our supposed femininity, girlishness or ladylike-ness. It is for everyone who knows a woman, loves a woman, is a woman.

The seven amazing artists in this exhibition, as well as those who contributed to this publication, are powerful and expressive in their artistic work, and their lives. They present paintings, videos, performances and written works focusing on the corporeal in particular, examining how the body can be a locus; often a tool, an object, a vehicle; sometimes a disappointment, but always a triumph.

HOLLY DAIZY BROUGHTON &
LYNN SERAINA BATTAGLIA

EVENTS

Entry to all events is free of charge. All events take place in The Glass Tank.

CURATORS IN CONVERSATION

Friday 21 February, 7pm

Join our curators Lynn Seraina Battaglia and Holly Daizy Broughton in the gallery space for a tour of the exhibition and hear them talk about what the work means to them, and how it speaks to the themes of *She Performs: The Body*.

PERFORMANCES

Friday 21 February, 8pm

Exhibition artists Jemima Hall and Naomi Morris will perform works live in the gallery space.

SHE HEARS

Thursday 5 March, 6:30pm

Inspired by Sheherazade - who each night, for one thousand and one Arabian nights, told a tale to save her life - *She Hears* is a storytelling event: a safe, welcoming space for participating women to share a true story on the theme of 'the body'.

SHE SPEAKS

Saturday 7 March, 2pm

Facilitated by our Curator of Interpretation, this panel-led round table discussion is an opportunity to further explore the exhibition's themes, including the challenges facing women in the art world, and how women artists are taking back the body and focusing the female gaze.



Naomi Morris, 'Falling Through' as part of 'Neither Use Nor Ornament' at OVADA April 2019 / Photo by Stu Allsopp



ALA JAZAYERI

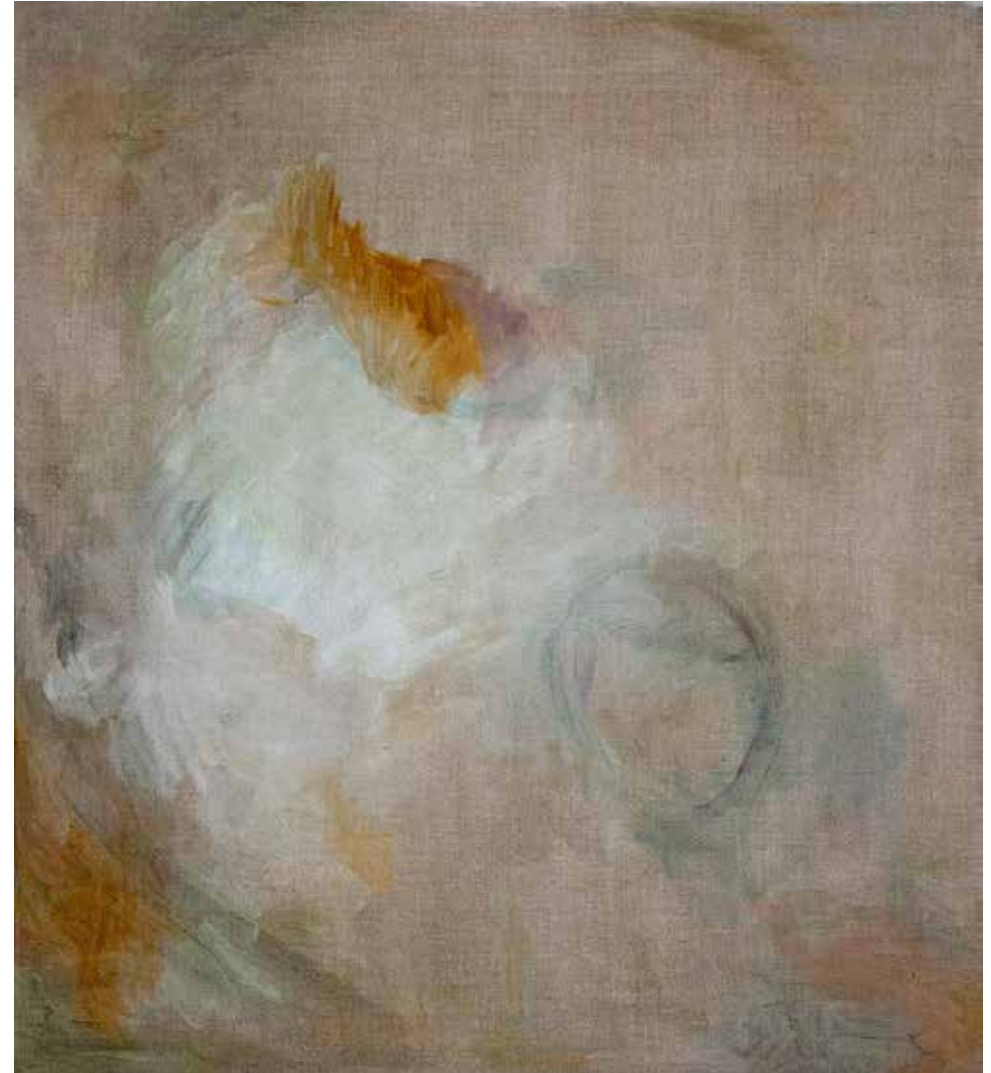
The inspiration for Ala Jazayeri's work comes from her personal experience. Born and raised in Iran, the concept of *Haya* - often translated as shame/modesty - was formative in how she, like many Iranians, was instructed on and habituated to bodily presence and pleasures. To be considered virtuous is to adhere to the demands of *Haya*, which applies to both women and men, albeit in different ways.

CORPOREAL ELISIONS (2015-2019) **SILENT BODIES (2015-2019)**

The starting point for these series of paintings comes from Ala's thinking about how men and women relate to their corporeal embodiment in different cultural and social contexts. During the process of conceiving this series a particularly pertinent theme

was the notion of the estrangement and elusiveness of one's body, and the tensions that arise between norms, values, and cultural consciousness and affective awareness of one's own body. By going beyond the polarising figure of the veil, Ala's work attempts to convey how the process of negotiating an intimate familiarity with one's body is both open-ended and incomplete.

WWW.ALAJAZAYERI.COM



Silent bodies, 2016
Oil on Linen, 100 x 90 cm



ANNE GRIFFITHS

In her work, Anne Griffiths seeks to balance the familiar with the unexplained, the real with the imagined, to create something simultaneously small and intimate whilst also striking and impressive, something both beautiful and rough, something serious yet absurd.

Notions of value and preservation are accentuated by using traditional techniques such as mummification, taxidermy and the Japanese craft of Kintsugi (meaning 'golden joinery'). Connections between times, materials and cultures are merged to provoke a sense of fascination and create a story.

KINTSUGI EGGS (2017)

The egg may be the most perfect thing in the universe.

Ancient peoples believed the universe itself was hatched from an egg, and although the wonder it aroused in our ancestors may be lost, it remains

a symbol of fertility, new life and reincarnation for many of today's religions.

In folklore, when the primal egg breaks the yolk becomes the sun, the white the moon, and new life begins. But it comes at a cost – the smooth ovoid shell is shattered, its contents spilled; the allure and fascination of this perfect, mysterious structure is lost.

In restoring these broken eggs, new and beautiful forms are created. Anne reminds us of the imperfections and transience of individual life, in which each blemish and wrinkle reflects the wisdom gained only through time and experience.

WWW.ANNEGRIFFITHS.COM



Kintsugi Egg, 2017
Emu egg, gold powder 15 x 10 x 9 cm



BEX MASSEY

Despite being told 'painting is dead', Bex Massey is unashamedly a painter, and her work examines the role of painting and the language of display in the face of popular (often digital) culture.

While Bex's work continues to ask the question, 'How do we view a painting?', over the last eighteen months the stories that she is trying to tell have changed. Interviewed for Young Space late last year, she said:

"In light of the 'Me too' and 'Gender pay gap' movements of 2018 there seems to be even more reason and a real momentum for women's emancipation. I've therefore been researching all things feminism. It's more often than not a depressing read, but happily this global movement also brings with it a feeling of paradigm change."

Bex's latest series of work, *Original Gyal Dem*, was created in response.

ORIGINAL GYAL DEM (2019)

In these works Bex discusses the farcical disparity between the genders in burying women – women moreover who have changed the course of history - in the gender stereotypes, curb calls, ageism, and objectification that has condemned them to the role of 'the second sex'.

At the present time, women account for less than 1% of recorded history. In reaction to this, Bex immortalises author Jane Austen, civil rights activist Rosa Parks, cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, and stateswoman Indira Gandhi in the equally endemically masculine medium of paint. The canvas frame containing each of the four heroines is a further nod to the stifling boxes that women have been placed in since time immemorial and are only now, just, beginning to break out of.

WWW.BEXMASSEY.COM



Indira, 2019
Oil and enamel on canvas, 80cm x 40cm x 6cm



CATALINA RENJIFO

Encompassing experimental sculpture, installation, drawing and photography, Catalina Renjifo's practice is research-based and aims to impart learning. When executing her work, materials are scrutinised in a process that involves dissolving, breaking down and reassembling (a method Catalina calls 'digestive') to assimilate both their materiality and cultural meaning. Each artwork asks a question - materials and process together becoming an embodiment of Catalina's original research enquiry. She says, "In their display, spatial structures and strategies of engagement are tested as embedded pedagogies, how artworks can be a starting point for learning."

Catalina's work maintains a dialogue with the scale and experience of the human body, inviting interactions and observing the relationships that invest artefacts with meaning. She is interested in artistic theories of knowledge to stress the cognitive nature of aesthetic experience and widen the perception of how we come to know.

GRASP (2016-2017)

To extract meaning from an object we must engage our senses. Catalina aims to communicate to the viewer's sense of touch the knowledge she has acquired through handling the material during the making process. She believes that if we look at an object as if we *might* hold it, the mere *possibility* of doing so conveys meaning even if we aren't able or permitted to actually grasp it.

With this piece Catalina deals with coming to terms with audiences arriving at their own interpretation of her work by interacting with it. Although in showing it Catalina allows others the freedom to understand it in their own way, she nonetheless exerts some control by suggesting touch as the sense by which knowledge can be acquired from these objects.

WWW.CATALINARENJIFO.COM



Grasp, 2017
Digital pigment print and ceramic object, Dimensions variable



FLEUR SIMON

Creating a dialogue between ceramics and epoxy resin, Fleur Simon's practice explores the dichotomies of grief and the absence of the body and soul after death. Fuelled by personal experiences of loss, she aims to demystify discussions of mortality in contemporary society through visualising these experiences.

By using clay and creating vessel formations, Fleur's practice works in a continuum with ancient multicultural funerary rituals – signifying the universality and timelessness of the concept of death.

SUBLIME SPACES (2019-20)

Through the containment of negative space and the suggestion of the corporeal, Fleur's work aims to evoke the emptiness of the body after the soul's departure. Inspired by Julian

Stair's *Quietus* series, her process of hand building and bisque firing suggests the human lifeline and the transformation of the body after death, ultimately provoking the idea of permanence and finality. Created using epoxy resin, Fleur's paintings visualise the internal landscapes of loss and provide an emotional setting for the vessels. The fluidity of the material and pouring method echoes the nature of emotion – fluctuating between the natural and the surreal, the suffocating and the tranquil.

WWW.FLEURSIMONART.COM



Barge, 2020
Acrylic paint and epoxy resin on plywood, 18.5cm x 15cm



JEMIMA HALL

Through her practice, Jemima Hall seeks to connect to her surroundings by redefining her relationship to the soil itself and exploring the earth's womb-like spaces. There she is confronted by her body's abilities (and sometimes lack thereof) to adapt to that of her animalistic ancestors. Jemima chases the wild landscapes of Scotland, developing her own practice and introducing people of all ages to the ancient practices of drawing, painting, sculpting and building with soil.

WOMB EXPLORING (2018-20)

"As I enter the womb of the earth, the seaweed of the sea, the roots of the tree, breathing in soil, I wonder; Am I able to regain an ancestral familiarity with what is beneath my feet? Is it

something that is lost, or simply forgotten? I do not wish to own, I wish to belong. I spread my scent and leave my tracks, not to own, but to belong. I reintroduce and rediscover my relationship to the landscape, as a way to define my existence. It becomes an intimate, symbiotic interaction".

WWW.JEMIMAEELISABETHHALL.COM



Womb Exploring, 2018-20
Film, 10 min.



NAOMI MORRIS

I don't know who I am?

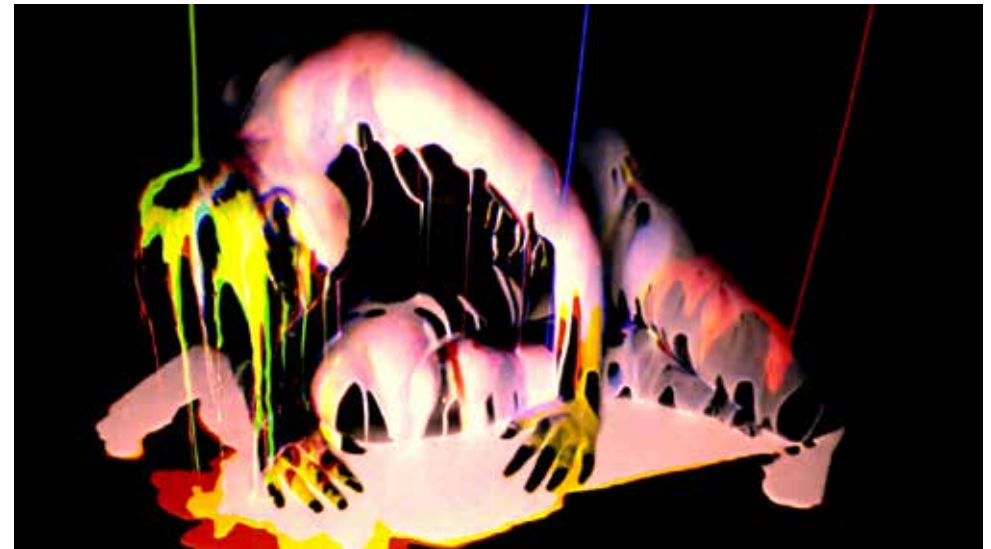
As an autistic woman, Naomi Morris speaks of her need to 'perform' every day – it is, she says, “like wearing a mask ... I feel my true identity is hidden and expressing myself is a real struggle.” Naomi uses her practice to explore this feeling of invisibility and attempt to deal with the frustration it causes.

REVEALED/CONCEALED (2017)

Revealed/Concealed aims to explore the sense of isolation and loneliness, the layers of misinterpretation, feelings of being overwhelmed, and the disablement that occurs as a result of having an invisible condition.

Naomi's form is revealed gradually as paint falls and curves around the contours of her body. Layer upon layer, the colours blend to uncover and expose Naomi's body as it emerges from the darkness. It is then concealed and retreats from sight which might echo the need to hide and become withdrawn and move back inwards.

WWW.NAOMIEMORRIS.WIXSITE.COM



Revealed/Concealed, 2017
HD video, 18 min 5 sec silent looped



PLEASE FIND BODY ENCLOSED

CAMILLA HANNEY

Recently I've been thinking about a body with no borders. Uncontained, Its curves and edges as mutable as clay. Formless, malleable flesh entirely unstoppable in its liquid-like state. As if caught in a continuous mode of becoming, It can shape shift, appropriating hybrid forms. The body swells and contracts and every so often, like a dam bursting, it dilates to a point of eruption, unleashing the boundless river of chaos that resides within. A relentless flow of passion, consumption, temptation and desire. The visceral sound of its rushing waters refusing to be silenced. This water does not serve to purify, it endeavours to submerge, it's an overspill that cannot be staunched.

Society and culture have taught us how to train our bodies to contain these spills, to prevent them from slipping back to their unruly, primal state. As nature and land and have been plundered and conquered, The animals within us have also been stifled and tamed. The wild woman of the past has been hunted and domesticated to a point of extinction.

How can we reconstruct a kinship and resurrect the feral, animal body that society has conditioned us to believe must be concealed?





Flute ridge slip slap app shine cold heat hangs on warm fall misted distance
 curls lichen longs lazy lust lists listless it will be amped played splayed deepest
 shadows drop glisten glimmer darkest pool violent space want cleanest arcs
 sparkle points spike feather burnished birch peaked froth frosted wisps hot
 breath bodice lips low light look eyes crisp clear curves cut den rusted tipped
 span addicted memories fire droplet dewy dusky daisies



Red lick leaf tip luminous leaves dark falls pinprick lights in lines and boxes
 wet hope tense taut tight delight strictures peak powerful limits glow light
 seen highs mottled lace lines sting longer linger pink flick hot cloud edges
 forms in times pierced light slide tied yes wow seen tipped money deepest
 fear doped itch screen spasm held head darkness shone through glowing
 holes tumbling times dark hearts heady everywhere softest sequined stories
 bound I let go gleaming

JENNIFER, ARTIST BOOK

DANIELA MÜLLER

a young woman naked female torso
in a white-gray small tiled wet room
torso turned to the right of the image
hands are pulled up to the chest
in her left hand she is holding a shaver colored
in white and light blue
and she covers the left chest
her right hand is holding a white soap
below the right breast with a bikini impression
she wears a transparent shower cap
below dark hair is visible
her mouth is open, laughing
(teeth + tongue are visible)
the shower spray comes from the right corner
which covers mouth and upper body
eyes are closed
black mascara flows on cheeks to the neck

I didn't remember her name at first, but I instantly
recognized her type. I knew girls like that
because I started observing and analysing them very early on
in order to mimic some of that behaviour.
Black dyed hair, expressive eye makeup, sleek, slender body,
shaved vagina, the iPhone, the pose, the selfie,
the overpriced Pellegrino water being placed ostentatiously
in the corner – all of that belongs to the secret code.
The code says: I belong to proprietary goods.
I am limited edition. You want me, but can't afford me.
Even as she is – stark naked, in a basic arrangement
of some hotel bathroom, without her designer jeans,
Louboutin pumps and a Birkin hanging from
her bent elbow, she still manages to send this message.
I don't care that it is all an act.
She's beautiful, she's a work of art. I wish I could wear her
like a piece of haute couture.

The piece of poetry, Oriannaha, has been first presented at the event SHE HEARS, SHE PERFORMS x PRIDE, the 16th of November 2019 at the Bucks County Museum. Extract :

O R I A N N A H A

This is a story of a woman,
the feminine,
maybe a mythological creature,
a legend, a witch,
maybe it's you, us,
perhaps me, all of us

This is the story of ORIANNAHA

(...)

Chapter 3 - Goddesses are rising

The earth cries
but She will never let the Universe down
she is in resistance through all seasons

the power of her breathing heart
glowing desire in dark times
when they burn her, She will rise again
stronger

my dear she is like an open sunflower
coming again from the moons
her feet do not touch the floor
her voice in the sky
dancing with the frost
divine
celestial
beauty in her energy
coming from inside
dressed with her hymn
of pure love
words taking her and embracing her skin
breathing
and her shoulder,
this little movement to the back of the room
little shift
a shoulder saying
fuck you with your self declared sovereignty
over my own body

and Oriannaha says
"i will transform your venom
your dominant lectures
your sexiest laugh
and your authoritative rules
that dictate my wishes
my powers
an my blood
I don't need your heterosexual norms
that dictates my dreams
and tell me to find value in the fact
that a guy wants to marry me

let me love whoever I want
and first
I will be the biggest rebel and
resistant on the Universe
by loving myself out loud
and I will honour all the witches you killed
with lies
because they deserve dignity like all of us

I will go naked down the river
I will bleed naturally and my blood will join
the water and roots of the trees
and this is beautiful
and from that blood
we will be thousands to grow with golden
hair"

And then she says out loud
"you do not have any of us"

her voice in the sky
dancing with the frost
remember what she told us :
"you silence will not protect you"

we are all goddesses
we rise
and we will always rise
because the Universe has our back
and we have, even if we don't know it,
golden hair surrounding our clitoris



CAMILLA HANNEY

Artist Camilla Hanney can claim a She Performs first – hers was our inaugural studio visit!

Camilla describes her practice as an attempt ‘to provide a voice for fragments of the past that have, over time, become embedded or lost in history’. Many of her works are inspired by the experiences of women in her native Ireland, particularly those who found themselves at the mercy of the Catholic Church.

Camilla’s writings are as exquisite as her work, and we are thrilled that she agreed to contribute *Please find body enclosed*, accompanied by an image of her recent work *Mother, Madonna, Monster* (2019).

WWW.CAMILLAHANNEY.WIXSITE.COM

CLARE PRICE

Clare Price is an artist and another long-standing member of the *She Performs* community. Since her work *I.s.t.h.* (2018) featured in She Performs’ inaugural exhibition, we have collaborated on a number of projects, including *She Hears: Circle*, a storytelling event held at Tate Modern in May 2019.

Sharing her ‘collage of stories’ with an audience unlocked the storyteller in Clare, and she has since produced a number of writings - two of which we are delighted to include here alongside images of Clare’s that originally existed as Instagram posts - and is working towards a performance.

WWW.CLAREPRICE.COM

DANIELA MÜLLER

Featured in She Performs’ Artist Spotlight, Daniela Müller talked about her writing in response to the question, ‘How does the body – yours and others’ – influence your work?’

Even though language is a big part of my work, I normally use and rearrange texts – I don’t write and struggle to do so ... In my work "Jennifer", the starting point of writing are the leaked pictures of a female actor. I sent them to other women and let them write about them whatever they want. Important for me was the non-sexualised gaze and how the own body and experiences with selfies influenced those texts. I wanted a linguistic female appropriation of these images, while they were circulating on porn sites. I published these texts as a book and performed them in a group of women. We were reading paragraphs while moving in between spectators.

Daniela is an artist based in Zurich, Switzerland.

WWW.DANIELAMUELLER.CH

LHUNAHĀ DEDENISE

Lhunahā Dedenise is a London-based French post-disciplinary designer and researcher, practising fashion; writer; poet; photographer; Earth Guardian.

Lhunahā Dedenise explores the potential of storytelling and new forms of narratives, and advocates for the empowerment of the courageous yet vulnerable feminine strength. She says:

I find it essential to construct new forms of narratives that deconstruct patriarchal norms and domination, related to intersectionality, and with that new forms of legends and role models can rise.

WWW.LHUNAHADEDENISE.COM

ABOUT SHE PERFORMS

She Performs is an inclusive movement that brings artists and their audiences together, empowering them to freely engage with and exchange ideas surrounding equality and gender representation.

The women behind She Performs are Lynn Seraina Battaglia, Holly Daizy Broughton and Nicola Waterman.

Lynn S. Battaglia is a Swiss curator, currently living and working in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. She is co-founder and curator of She Performs. She has worked in commercial galleries in Berlin and New York, and curated several exhibitions internationally.

Holly Daizy Broughton uses her background as an artist and photographer as the basis of her curatorial practice. With a Bachelor's in Fine Art from Oxford Brookes and a Master's in Museums, Galleries and Contemporary Culture, Holly has curated her own and others' work in a number of exhibitions.

An epiphany in Rome led **Nicola Waterman** to transfer her writing and interpretative skills to the world of galleries and museums. After completing a Master's in Museums, Galleries and Contemporary Culture, Nicola began her new life as a curator. She combines a passion for connecting people to art with an unwavering commitment to social inclusion and learning.

WWW.SHEPERFORMS.COM

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ALA JAZAYERI
ANNE GRIFFITHS
BEX MASSEY
CATALINA RENJIFO
FLEUR SIMON
JEMIMA HALL
NAOMI MORRIS

We would also like thank all of our contributors:

CAMILLA HANNEY
CLARE PRICE
DANIELA MÜLLER
LHUNAHÄ DE DENISE

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GRAPHIC DESIGN: ANTHONY BERTSCHI



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20 Feb - 8 Mar 2019

THE GLASS TANK

Oxford Brookes University

Oxford

www.sheperforms.com