

GEORGE BLACKLOCK & GARY OLDMAN SLIPPING GLIMPERS

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Private View: Thursday 14 April, 6-8pm

Flowers Gallery is pleased to present a two-person exhibition of paintings and photographs by George Blacklock and Gary Oldman, exploring the mutual creative threads connecting their distinct artistic practices. Following on from their recent joint exhibition at the Museo De Las Artes, Guadalajara, this will be the first time their work has been presented together in the UK, and Gary Oldman's first major exhibition of photographs in a UK gallery.

Painter George Blacklock, and actor, filmmaker and photographer Gary Oldman have for the past twenty-five years engaged in a creative dialogue, sharing their respective journeys through painting, acting, filmmaking and photography; scrutinizing each other's work and encouraging the development of new ideas. Throughout this discourse, common themes have emerged; Blacklock and Oldman explore the creative process as a quest to discover something unseen, located only through the process of production, addressing questions about narrative, originality, subjectivity and collaboration.

The first encounter between the two artists took place while Oldman was researching a role for the film *Honest, Decent and True* (1986) in which Blacklock's paintings were used as props. Oldman visited the artist's studio to prepare for the role, both literally and metaphorically stepping into his paint-splattered shoes. This initial meeting was the beginning of an important friendship, based on their discovery of common ideas and mechanics of making between acting and painting, and their shared search for an elusive, alchemical quality which they mutually define as 'it'.

This fugitive state was referred to by the abstract expressionist painter Willem De Kooning who described himself as a "slipping glimpser", saying "*When I'm falling, I am doing all right. And when I am slipping, I say, 'Hey, this is very interesting' . . . That is a wonderful sensation... to slip into this glimpse.*"¹

The curvilinear shapes and motifs seen throughout Blacklock's paintings have developed as a continuation of historical narrative structures, forming an exchange with what he has termed as 'ancestral voices' of cultural history. Blacklock's *Pieta* series took Michelangelo's *Pieta* in the Florence Academy as a point of entry to examine further painterly possibilities. Working on this series over a period of several years, Blacklock developed a lexicon of interrelated shapes, through a process of repeating and distilling elements of Michelangelo's original composition, striking a balance with the improvisational nature of his experimentation with colour and gesture.

The panoramic aspect of Oldman's photographs suggests a cinematic narrative, in which the viewer is positioned behind the scenes. Working with a Swing-lens Widelux F6B in order to cover the full expanse of the eye's experiential range, Oldman has described his use of the panorama as inviting the viewer to become immersed within the viewpoint of an alternate subjective persona. Photographing from the sets of films such as *The Book of Eli* (2010), and *Child 44* (2015), Oldman navigates away from the centre of the action within each scene, concentrating on the discreet details occurring at their edges.



George Blacklock,
Ancestral Voices, 2014,
Oil on canvas

Gary Oldman,
Reflection, New Mexico, 2009.
Archival Digital Pigment Print

About George Blacklock

George Blacklock was born in 1952 in County Durham, England. He studied at Sunderland Polytechnic for one year before going on to study painting at Stourbridge College of Art in the early seventies, and completed his Masters at Reading University in 1976. Blacklock has been the Dean of Chelsea College of Art and Design, London since 2011. He has exhibited extensively in Europe and North America throughout his career and has been represented by Flowers gallery, London and New York, since 1996. He has received awards from the Welsh Arts Council; the Greater London Arts Association; and was a prize winner at the John Moores contemporary painting competition in 1993. His recent book 'Colour and Abstraction' was published by The Crowood Press in the UK in 2015.

About Gary Oldman

Gary Oldman is one of the major motion picture industry's most successful actors – often referred to as one of the most versatile and underrated stars working in Hollywood today. Over a career that spans 25 years, his work has been recognized by the Academy Awards, the British Academy of Film and Television Awards, the British Independent Film Awards, the Independent Spirit Awards, the Screen Actors Guild, and the Emmy Awards. In 1995, Oldman wrote and directed the highly acclaimed *Nil By Mouth* - winning nine of the seventeen major awards for which it was nominated, it was selected to open the main competition for the 1997 50th Anniversary of the Cannes Film Festival. The same year Oldman won the prestigious Channel Four Director's Prize at the Edinburgh Film Festival in addition to winning the British Academy Award for Best British Film and Best Original Screenplay.

Oldman's lesser-known practice of photography focuses on an exploration of the medium itself, from tintypes and ambrotypes with a wet plate portrait studio camera to capturing behind-the-scenes pictures of actors, crew and film locations with a Widelux camera. His work has previously been exhibited in the exhibition *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, an exhibition of photography by Gary Oldman and Jack English, in collaboration with Paul Smith, at the Kennedy's Museum, Berlin, in 2012.



Gary Oldman, *Backseat, Prague*, 2013, Archival Digital Pigment Print



Gary Oldman, *Philippe, Prague*, 2013, Archival Digital Pigment Print



George Blacklock, *Pieta VIII*, 2006, Oil on Canvas

1. *In Short; A Slipping Glimpser*, Sarah Boxer, August 7, 1994, NYTimes.com

Notes for Editors

Slipping Glimpsers is co-organised by Flowers Gallery, London & New York, and the Museo De Las Artes, Universidad De Guadalajara. The exhibition has travelled from the Museo De Las Artes where it opened in November 2015.

Opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm.

For further information and images please contact Hannah Hughes - Hannah@flowersgallery.com / 0207 920 7777

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