

DAMIEN HIRST DEATH OF ST JOHN 2002 ACCESSION

His life in short

Born in Bristol in 1965, Damien Hirst studied at Goldsmith s College, London. In 1988 he curated the now renowned exhibition, Freeze , held in London. In 1991, he had his first solo exhibition in London entitled In and Out of Love and the following year he was a major part of the groundbreaking Young British Artists exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery, London. He was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize, London in 1995. Hirst s work has been shown in many important group and solo shows throughout the world. He lives and works in Devon, London and Mexico.

Hirst isn't just an artist : he's a cottage industry – he employs a full time staff of 50 and has four studios. Toddington Manor – 300 room gothic revival castle that will display his work.

Relationship with Charles Saatchi

Charles Saatchi played a significant role in launching and promoting Damien Hirst.

Damien has now fallen out with Saatchi over the hanging of the Damien Hirst retrospective with which Saatchi chose to open his new museum in London's County Hall. Saatchi asked Damien for suggestions, and then ignored them when Damien made some. Even though it contains almost all his best-known work, Damien refuses to see the Saatchi show.

Damien Hirst Young British Artist – (YBA)

there is not a sliver of doubt that Damien Hirst's arrival on the art scene changed the relationship between modern art and the British people. Without him, I suggest, there would be no Tate Modern; or at least no hugely successful Tate Modern with long queues outside it. Before Damien Hirst came along, nobody queued to see contemporary art.

Other famous YBA = Tracey Emin

CRYSTAL SKULLS AND VOMITING VISITORS: HIRST'S CAREER IN HIGHLIGHTS

Damian Hirst forged his reputation as the enfant terrible of the British art world. His iconic pieces have garnered plaudits and abuse in equal measure - but they have also made him one of the richest artists alive. The Turner Prize winner is now worth an estimated £215million.

Hirst's most controversial pieces have included a shark entombed in formaldehyde which was funded by Charles Saatchi and eventually sold for £50,000.

This was followed by Away from the Flock, a sheep, once again pickled in formaldehyde, which was vandalised by another artist while on display at the

Serpentine Gallery.

Mark Bridger poured black ink into the tank and then announced he was renaming the work Black Sheep. He was given two years' probation for his actions.

There was yet more controversy when Hirst attempted to exhibit Two F*****g and Two Watching in New York.

This was the work that featured a rotting cow and bull - and was banned by public health officials over fears of 'vomiting visitors.'

For the Love of God was the artist's most recent high profile work. A human skull encrusted with 8,601 diamonds, it cost £14million to produce and sold in 2007 for £50million. In the last few years, Hirst has begun to concentrate on painting.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1348845/Damien-Hirsts-latest-unveiled-Royal-Academy-Arts-Maggots-flies-barbecue.html#ixzz1YKAOkuec>

Damien Hirst: Romance in the Age of Uncertainty –EXHIBITION FROM WHICH THIS WORK COMES – WHITE CUBE – LONDON 2003

10 Sep—19 Oct 2003 Romance in the Age of Uncertainty was the first solo exhibition of new work by Damien Hirst in London since he exhibited Still at White Cube, Duke Street, in 1995. This extensive exhibition of new sculptures and paintings collectively examined, dissected and recast the story of Jesus and the Disciples. Through these new religious works Hirst explored the uncertainty at the heart of human experience; the confusing relations between love, life and death; communion and isolation; loyalty and betrayal. And in so doing Hirst brings into play religion, art and science, layering these categories together, opening them up, in works that tell new and different stories. Amongst the works in the exhibition were the Apostles, a series of cabinets that represent the deaths of the Disciples and the Ascension of Jesus. There are thirteen sculptures in the series, each of which is a steel and glass cabinet, with a mirrored back surface, that contains objects arranged on several glass shelves. Most of the objects are now redundant laboratory glassware: transparent flasks, bell jars, crucibles and measuring tubes. In earlier works Hirst used the cabinets to present a scientific taxonomy of a single type of object; here the singularity and sterile 'sealed-in-ness' is replaced by a complex sensuous and baroque layering. Glassware, forceps and specimen dishes are mixed together with rosaries and crosses. There are also hammers, clubs and a sword, and many of the cabinets are themselves violated with stigmata-like holes, their outer membrane cut through and stabbed, some spilling out blood-stained coils of plastic tubing-like entrails. These new works are layered, traumatised and porous. Each cabinet is dedicated to a single Disciple, an abstract portrait of his own particular martyrdom. Since the bodies are missing, we as viewers must work backwards from the point of violent death to reconstruct a life and identity of the victim

through the various traumas inflicted and through examination of the objects within the cabinets. At the base of each cabinet stands the corresponding Disciple represented by a sacrificial cow's head that has been variously skinned, divided or inverted and preserved in formaldehyde in a glass tank. It is the inescapable factual reality of the cow's heads, their incontestable presence, that seems to refuse imaginative entry, to arrest thought and throw you back on yourself.

By contrast, the ethereal spirit of Jesus is represented by a clear glass tank. On the wall behind, a mirror-backed case is left pristinely empty to symbolize Christ's Ascension into Heaven. Above the case, a series of glass shelves crowded with clear glass vessels rises to the ceiling, surmounted by a stuffed white dove -- the Holy Spirit.

Brit-Art prodigy Damien Hirst is once again news in England. His recently opened solo show at the White Cube, "Romance in the Age of Uncertainty," has inaugurated the London season with a bang.

Despite not exhibiting on his native turf for nearly a decade, Hirst remains England's most omnipresent artist. Since the mid-1990s, we've eaten in his restaurants Pharmacy and Quo Vadis. We've watched him belting out his football ditty *Vindaloo* on *Top of the Pops*. We've been whisked away by planes and boats branded with his signature spots. One of Hirst's spot paintings was recently dispatched to Mars on the *Beagle II*. An A-list celebrity, Hirst's contorted face (his signature pose) appears almost daily in British newspapers and magazines. He has been the subject of numerous TV and radio broadcasts. We've even seen the inside of his swank new summer house in Devon on Channel 4.

OTHER MEDICINE CABINETS

Medicine cabinets – designed for the Pharmacy – restaurant which opened in 1998 closed 2003 – sold at auction the contents - Fragile truth 97-98 8 by 12 foot medicine cabinet sold for 2.2 million dollars. Confirms Hirst's status as a major contemporary artist.

Latest Work

Damien Hirst has chosen Beyond Limits 2011 at Chatworth as the venue to showcase his latest sculptural work. The artist has written that he believes that science and religion are the guiding lights for the human condition and they find eloquent expression in the majestic equine form of Legend. This monumental winged horse stands atop its plinth as an icon of Hirst's new modern mythologizing art. Pegasus, embodying the freedom and nobility of nature, was the legendary beast that Bellerephon rode to defeat the Chimera. However Hirst's Legend has come under the scrutiny of the

vivisectionist. One flank has been surgically flayed, exposing its muscles and bare bones, showing the secrets of this mythological animal. An elegant counterpart is another sculpture by Hirst, Myth (2010), which depicts the fabled unicorn. Its shimmering white flank is also flayed to reveal the visceral musculature beneath.

Another development Hirst taking up painting by himself

Locked up in shed in Devon with brush and paint – teaching himself to paint knee deep in Prussian blue and Cremnitz white.

Looking for something new and deeper. (spot paintings employed others to paint in the spots - around 800 paintings)

Two other studios just closed one in Gloucestershire – one south London .

New paintings = blue paintings – since 2006 without assistance. “who does he think he is Francis Bacon?”

Same sketchy blurriness and white lines of Bacon. References to his other works – white spots, phantom butterflies, outlined ashtrays, indeterminate vitrine like spaces and skulls.

Death has always been his métier, but death of three of his friends - Musician Joe Strummer, artist Angus Fairhurst, Gordon Burn. (writer) may have caused a Midlife crisis? Can't deny painting any more.

FACTOID

Damien is now Britain's biggest importer of butterflies? His new butterfly pictures use up so many of the things that he cannot get enough of them and has to salvage extra specimens wherever he can. Three people are at work full-time in his studio in Gloucestershire making butterfly pictures. The pictures use more butterflies than ever. So densely are they packed with geometric configurations of lepidopteral wonders that, from a distance, they look like stained-glass windows. When his new show goes up, his butterfly pictures will do their bit by creating a dark, religious glow.

(David Beckham bought one for Victoria)

What's that smell, Damien? Oh, **that's the fly factory**. A chap called James is in there right now stocking it with fresh maggots bought from a fisherman's supplier. Hundreds of the little lovelies are buzzing around James keenly, and they'll soon be joined by thousands more. The fly's role in Damien's art is to die for him. A

big, black picture called The Fear consists, I see, when I get up close to it, of nothing but dead flies stuck on in creepy cakes of death, many centimetres thick. Now that's what I call a sacrifice.

Quotes

'I've always thought you have to get people listening to you before you can change their minds,' he explains. The pickled sharks, the expiring flies, the sliced-up pigs, are intent on getting themselves noticed, sure, but once they've done that, the message they seek to convey is a charmingly old-fashioned one. Life is short and precious. Death is dark and inevitable.

Quote : "even when you wipe your ass it's a self portrait" –

BIBLIOGRAPHY (Courtesy of Liz Armstrong)

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<http://www.whitecube.com/exhibitions/romanceintheageofuncertainty/>

Interesting website showing a few of his works

<http://www.complex.com/art-design/2009/07/art-beat-the-10-damien-hirst-works-you-should-know>