

# Vinca Petersen: Me, Us and Dogs

03 November - 16 December 2023

Opening reception | Thursday 02 November 6-8pm



Edel Assanti is pleased to present Vinca Petersen's second solo exhibition at the gallery, *Me, Us and Dogs*, concurrent with the artist's inclusion in two inaugural displays on view in London at the V&A Photography Centre and the recently reopened National Portrait Gallery.

*Me, Us and Dogs* engages with Petersen's extensive archive of photographs and materials predominantly from the 14-year period (1990-2004) in which she was immersed in the free party and Traveller communities. Petersen's new series takes the form of thematic groupings of photographs and archival ephemera, punctuated by more contemporary images alongside the artist's own words.

Brought together in diaristic constellations, the works comprise over 100 largely previously unseen photographs. At times the assemblies convey a narrative sequence relating to a specific episode within Petersen's experimental community's journey; elsewhere they operate through abstract association, playfully engaging with the instability of the relationship between memory, image and archive.

Petersen began taking photographs as a means of capturing memories of a subversive way of living among a transient group of close friends. Petersen moved to a London squat at the age of 17 and quickly became part of the communities responsible for the birth of rave culture. Following the infamous clampdown on 'repetitive beats' included in the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, Petersen and her circle packed their sound systems in convoys of trucks and adopted a nomadic

lifestyle travelling across Europe. The artist remained on the road until 2005, a few months before the birth of her son.

*Parco Nord* includes a selection of photographs taken in a park in the centre of Bologna, which Petersen shared with a circus in the winter of 1996. This semi-autonomous patch of land, near the centre of Bologna yet isolated by the surrounding motorway, provided Petersen and her tribe with an escape from chaotic life on the road. *Site Dogs* unravels the bond between humans and animals, featuring Petersen's own dog, Come On, who was rescued from the scorching heat outside a bar in Spain. In another work, Petersen assembles a series of intimate self-portraits which she began collecting at the age of fifteen, affirming her artistic presence and the evolution of her self-perception. *Homes* compiles an array of photographs and mementos of varied spaces the artist called home during the period, ranging from squats to bedrooms, 4x4s, motorhomes and trucks.

The tone of Petersen's work is intimate and personal, documenting a fleeting, aspirational community fostering an existence beyond systems of control and hierarchy. A multi-disciplinary artist whose lifelong work has been in the area of social practice, Petersen's works emerge from deep engagement with marginalised and underrepresented communities, at the heart of which is a belief in creativity as a means of breaking barriers between individuals. Her psychologically charged works offer a glimpse of a world beyond conventional societal expectations, cutting across boundaries of class, identity and geography.

## Notes to Editors

### About Vinca Petersen

Vinca Petersen's (b.1973) recent solo exhibitions include *Make Social Honey - A Collective Search for Joy*, Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland, UK (2022); *Raves and Riots*, Edel Assanti, London, UK. Selected group exhibitions include *Techno Worlds*, Goethe-Institut, Los Angeles, USA (2022); *Sweet Harmony: Out of the Underground*, HetHEM, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2022); *It's a Rave Dave*, Giant Gallery, Bournemouth, UK (2021); *Night Fever: Designing Club Culture*, V&A Dundee, Dundee, UK (2021); *Rave*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK (2019); *Seaside Photographed*, Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (2019); *Diaristic Books*, Turner Contemporary, London, UK (2019). Her work is represented in public collections including The Arts Council Collection, London, UK; National Portrait Gallery, London, UK; The Monsoon Collection, London, UK; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK. Vinca Petersen lives and works on the Isle of Skye.

### Contact Us

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